THE SPREADING DAWN

By Basil King

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The Spreading Dawn

Books by

BASIL KING

THE SPREADING DAWN
ABRAHAM'S BOSOM
THE BIBLE AND COMMONSENSE
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GOING WEST
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LETTER OF THE CONTRACT
THE LIFTED VEIL
SIDE OF THE ANGELS
THE STEPS OF HONOR
STREET CALLED STRAIGHT
THE THREAD OF FLAME
THE WAY HOME
THE WILD OLIVE

The SPREADING DAWN

STORIES OF THE GREAT TRANSITION

BY

BASIL KING

NEW YORK AND LONDON
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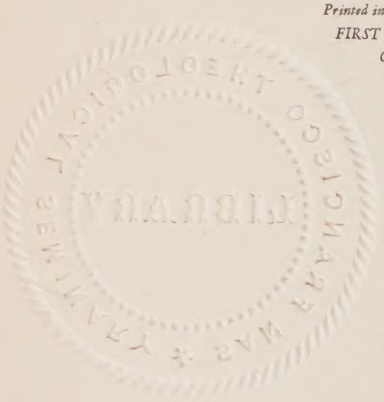

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Foreword

It should be needless to say that the stories in this volume are imaginative efforts only. They claim no more than what dear Emily Dickinson calls "the right of supposing." "In a life that stopped guessing," she says further, "you and I would not feel at home." Few of us can ever stop guessing as to what it will be like when as individuals we have to cross the Threshold. We say to ourselves, naturally enough, "It may be like this," or, "It may be like that," according to the mood we are in. These stories do no more. They do not express convictions as to matters which no one can hold convictions about. Still less do they presume to teach. If they suggest, that is quite another thing, and wholly within "the right of supposing."

I have only to add that my warm thanks are

due to the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Red Book*, the *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, the *Pictorial Review*, and *McCall's Magazine* for allowing me to reprint what has already appeared in their pages.

Boston, Massachusetts, 1927.

The Spreading Dawn

Don't tell me to get ready to die. I know not what shall be. The only preparation I can make is by fulfilling my present duties. This is the everlasting life.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Christ to me is the justification and inspiration to keep my body and mind fit and perfect, that thereby I may preserve myself, my soul, fit to accomplish, able to serve, and confident that I shall hear over there, not "You are loosed from the wheel of life, you can now enjoy forgetfulness," but "Well done; here are more talents for you, and more victories to win. Enter into that kind of joy which is the joy of your Lord."

—Wilfred Grenfell

I

The Spreading Dawn

"Love like the light silently wrapping all."

—Walt Whitman: *Song of the Universal.*

I

LD MRS. VANDERPYL found in dying the same grim satisfaction with which she had lived. She had never feared death, though she had always expected it to be disagreeable. It proved to be peaceful, however, and to some extent luxurious. She seemed to herself to be sinking, sinking, sinking, into something downy, delicious, and deep that guarded her against a fall. She had no pain; she was not unduly aware of weakness. As for senile decay, the idea wouldn't have occurred to her had she not heard the doctor name it to the nurse as the cause of this tranquil end. She laughed at that—laughed with the remote inward amusement that sent no light to the eye

and no ripple to the lips, and that none of the healthy, sturdy living things round her suspected she could feel. When she thought of them—the two nephews and the niece, the cousin and the niece-in-law—death became even more enlivening than life since it brought her nearer to her purposes.

Hugging her purposes, she laughed again. A few days ago she would have been equal to a faint cackle, like the rattle of far-away musketry. As it was, she had no more strength for that, but her capacity for jocose anticipation hadn't failed her. They supposed she was unconscious because she lay so still, her keen, delicate, hook-nosed profile cutting into the shadowy folds of the pillow. If her eyes appeared to be closed it was only because the lids, that might have been woven of some marvellous ancient tissue, drooped from weariness. Nevertheless, she could see as sharply as she had ever seen in her life, and could read the thoughts of those in the room with a shrewdness that was an enjoyment in itself.

She knew, for example, that Molly Van-

derpyl, Lewis's wife, was bored as well as frightened by this tedious departure, and at three on a winter's morning wanted to go to bed.

"Lewis, why can't we? She doesn't know anyone now."

"She'll not last much longer," the patient heard her elder nephew whisper in response. "We've stuck it out so far. Let us do it to the end."

No one knew better than the dying woman all that this little speech implied. They had stuck it out so far; she herself had seen to it. Having the power to keep them all like puppets on a string, she had got the chief part of her pleasure from doing it. Men though her nephews were, she had skillfully thwarted their efforts to become independent, and as for her niece she had held her bound if not precisely gagged. When, as she was aware, they had groaned and cursed to each other in private, she had been the more completely gratified in the exaction of her dues.

It was because they believed that that part

of their trial was over now that they could be so patient. They could watch with her through this one night, since it was to be the last. Lewis, big, stout, kindly, handsome, and stupid, had placed himself nearest to her pillow, turning at intervals to where his little terrified wife sat in the shadow, to reassure her or press her hand. For the first time under that roof he risked these endearments openly, believing the eye whose glance would have forbidden them to be glazed in approaching death. The alert mind took in, however, all the significance of these trifling acts, as well as that of Georgina's appraising promenades about the dim, sacred room whose mistress was leaving it forever. Georgina considered herself free to do to-night what she had never dared in all her eight and twenty years. Nominally occupying a seat at the side of the great canopied bed opposite to her brother Lewis, she got up repeatedly to examine this or that object and speculate as to whose it would be. She lifted the covers of boxes and took out brooches and rings; she opened drawers and inspected their contents.

She did this with the languid, distinguished movement which was her special characteristic. Everything about her was languid and distinguished, except perhaps her wishes and her will.

Of the three Vanderpyls she was the most stubbornly rebellious to the aged aunt's authority. When, for example, she had announced her engagement to young Frank Stiles, a broker trying to make a fortune in Wall Street without capital, old Mrs. Vanderpyl had contented herself with saying: "There will be no such engagement as long as I live." To this Georgina, with an oblique resting of her dreamy eyes, and in a tone which her *voix traînante* made only the more insolent, had replied: "Oh, well, you won't live forever!" and the matter had seemingly rested there. Georgina remained engaged secretly, and the old lady made no further reference to the subject. Least of all did she hint at a modification of those purposes in which, as she frequently declared to Lizzie Pentreath, her nephews and

her niece by marriage would be the most interested parties.

Nugent, the second nephew, tiptoed softly up and down the room, pausing from time to time to gaze with an awed, expectant fascination on the pale, rigid, exquisite features. Now and then old Mrs. Vanderpyl felt him stoop with his ear to her lips or her heart. "I think she's going," or "I think she's gone," he whispered occasionally to the white-capped nurse who stood at the head of the bed and invariably replied: "No, not yet; it will be more toward morning." Nugent was stout like his brother, but shorter and stockier—the typical New York business man of the type that takes an interest in ward politics. His aunt had destined him for diplomacy, as being a career worthy of a Vanderpyl; but Nugent's taste for the hurly-burly of New York had gone beyond her intentions and control.

At one of the moments when the nurse had given him her official reply Lizzie Pentreath came sniffing from her seat in a far corner of

the room, as if to verify the woman's conclusions for herself.

"Do you know me, dear?"

She had asked the question at least half a dozen times since midnight, bending over her dying patroness, with tears streaming down her pretty, waxlike cheeks. Old Mrs. Vanderpyl could offer no reply but in her customary mute disdain. Lizzie Pentreath with her goodness, her piety, and her humbleness of spirit, had always been a fool, and was not more so now at seventy than she had been at seventeen. She was the dying woman's cousin on the mother's side, which was not the side that had left the money. When, years ago, her one little love affair had ended without a sequel, leaving no more trace, except in Lizzie's heart, than the perfume of a last summer's flower, Cornelia Vanderpyl had taken her on as a sort of lady-in-waiting in the great house between Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Streets in Fifth Avenue, where, faithful, devoted, doglike, she had lived for forty years. Kicks as well as ha'pence had entered into her reward, and she had taken

both with a sweetness and a patience that verged on gratitude.

Of this loyalty old Mrs. Vanderply was aware. With the exception of foolish Lizzie Pentreath, there wasn't a being left on earth to whom her death wouldn't come as a relief. As for Lewis and Molly, for Nugent and Georgina, she was where for years they had been longing to see her. She bore them no grudge for their joy—or at least no addition to the grudge she had borne them all their lives. Since grudges were part of the game, she took comfort in the reflection that it was a game at which two sides could play. Her zest was heightened rather than diminished by the knowledge that she played alone, while the fact that her ace would be laid on the table only when they felt assured that she could play no more inspired her with patience.

It made dying easier. Death would in a measure not be death so long as her will was imposed on those who stayed behind. As for senile decay, she laughed at it again—her silent, bitter, inward chuckle, of which the re-

pression but added to the mirth. Senile decay when she was only eighty-two! Had they any conception of how short a time eighty-two years could be? Why, it was but yesterday that she had been a little girl. It was no effort whatever to go back to the period, or to reconstruct the fine old house her grandfather had built, in which she herself was born, in Ann Street. An office building now stood on the site, and from it she drew some of her ample means. She hated bequeathing it to the Vanderpyls, nor would she have done so had there been any Mercers nearer than some ridiculously remote cousins in Illinois of whom to make her heirs. Otherwise all the Mercers had died out. She herself, the only child of an only child of an only child, was the last of the line in New York.

They had been great people in their day, the Mercers. The mere sites of their houses were as milestones in metropolitan history. They had lived in Battery Park before moving to Ann Street, and from Ann Street they had migrated to Washington Square. In Washing-

ton Square she had come out, with all the éclat due to her position as an heiress. Heiresses were rare in those days, and rarer still those whose fortunes ran over the million mark like hers. At eighteen she had been a personage in the New York of the mid-nineteenth century, and had felt herself equal to the destiny. Nature having created her beautiful and proud, and fate having, as the saying went, put the world at her feet, she had come early to a sense of power. Power rather than love or pleasure had given the secret impulse to her life. Had she been a man, she would have been a general, an admiral, or a statesman. She had never expressed it so; she had hardly been aware of it; but a ruling fact was a ruling fact.

A ruling fact was a ruling fact, and she could look back on its persistence now with an odd clarity of analysis. It was extraordinary how vivid the past became in these last hours of summing up. Events she had forgotten—people to whom she had never attached im-

portance as factors in her life—details of which she hadn't appreciated the significance—stood out in dreamlike luminosity, not as vanished or gone by, but as present and potential. They came as illustrations of her appetite for power. That detached itself when much else remained obscure. She saw now that when in her youth she had been courted, flattered, or amused, it was not courting, flattery, or amusement that had thrilled her most; it was the knowledge that she held the wills of others in her grasp, to thwart, or gratify, or bend to suit herself. In days when she had had no rival in New York—when she had been admired and wooed at the Court of the Second Empire—when, as the phrase went, she had turned the heads of half the young men in London—her real joy had lain in the fact that this homage was her due. It was hers to make use of or to fling away—and to fling it away was the use which in general she made of it. She broke hearts and frustrated ambitions without compunction. Her beauty could do the one and her money the other. She had prized both these assets in

proportion as they made her a woman to be feared.

They passed before her in a kind of procession, the men who would have married her. Nearly all of them were dead, while those who survived were so old now that covetousness and passion had alike burned out their fires. But she saw them as young, dashing, eager, crowding and battling for her hand. There were all sorts of nooks and corners and green fields and country roads associated with this one's proposal and that one's, of which little remained except in her memory.

There was, for example, the ocean-side dell at Newport where Charlie Evans had asked her to marry him. It was no more than a fold in the coast line through which you could have slipped down into the sea. The Cliff Walk ran above it—then but a frayed, loosely flung ribbon guaranteeing Fisherman's Rights. Charlie had been the first. He had put his question between two bursts of laughter, and had expected the answer she gave him. But he had really cared for her—had married no

one else—and nine years later fell at Gettysburg. As under her drooped lids she watched Georgina languidly taking up the silver articles on the toilet table one by one, appropriating them to herself, she wondered if, "more toward morning," as the nurse expressed it, she and Charlie Evans would meet again.

Then there was a rocky pasture in that portion of New York where the streets between Sixtieth and Seventieth now ran, and which had been purchased at a bargain by her father. She had invited Loring Brent to walk with her there on purpose to "have it over." It was an afternoon in spring, and whole stretches of the poverty-stricken soil were white and mauve with patches of close-growing eyebright. Loring Brent was a rising young lawyer, clever, crafty, ambitious, and well born. He had a right to pretend to her hand, but not as a means of getting hold of her money. It had been a satisfaction to her during all those years in which she watched him climb from a large practice to the Senate, and from the Senate to an Embassy, to remember she had told him so.

Though he made a success on another woman's money, he must always have carried in his heart the sting of what she had said to him in the rocky pasture that April afternoon. She herself could recall it almost word for word as her eyes followed his coffin up the aisle of St. Thomas's only three years previously.

Then there was a shady corner in a drawing-room that was now part of an establishment for the sale of ready-made clothing. Here Bertie Bell had informed her, with a mixture of humor and crudeness, that as they were two of a kind they had better throw their resources together. By two of a kind he meant that they were both butterflies of fashion, and on her money they could continue an easy, flowery flight. It was the last thing he ever said to her. When they met in the future it amused her to see how he dodged her approach. Though he long kept his status as a leader of cotillons he dropped out of society in time, and she recalled hearing, some quarter of a century later, that he had died, forlorn and

almost penniless, in a boarding house in Brooklyn.

There were others—a good many others—American business men, French counts, Italian princes, English younger sons, of each of whom she remembered the name and the looks and the character. And then had come her own great, entrancing, enslaving, miserable fiasco of a romance.

She was thirty when she met at last the man of her dreams. He was Anthony Vanderpyl, of the well-known banking family the ruin of which had supplied New York, in the year 1860, with a topic of conversation almost as burning as that of slavery in the South.

With the downfall of the house Peter Vanderpyl had committed suicide, leaving a widow to struggle with the task of bringing up a family of five sons. Of these Anthony was the eldest and Lewis the youngest. It was fortunate that at the time of his father's death Anthony Vanderpyl had already passed through Yale, and so was able, with the aid of a large

and influential cousinship, to act the paternal rôle toward his younger brothers. The position of responsibility rendering him dignified, grave, and preoccupied beyond his years, he became an interesting, attractive figure, especially to people older than himself. He won their esteem and confidence. There were few who didn't predict that in him the name of Vanderpyl would be speedily restored. When, therefore, in 1862, he went to the war in the Seventh New York Cavalry, the renunciation of a brilliant future was looked upon as heroic not only on the young man's part, but on that of the family who had let him go.

Cornelia Mercer never denied that when she met him, convalescent from a shattered right arm, at the end of 1863, she fell in love with him at first sight. Though she was thirty while he was only twenty-five, sorrow, hardship, and suffering had so stamped him that he seemed her senior by ten years.

She was then at the supreme moment of a beauty which two generations later had become

almost legendary in New York. Tall, slender, and strong, quick, free, and lithe in her movements, a dancer, a horsewoman, a mistress on the croquet lawn, an actress, a singer, a pianist, a linguist, she commanded all the arts the mid-nineteenth century admired in a woman. The hardness of the eye went unnoticed in contemplation of the brilliant skin, just as one forgot the iciness of the voice in laughing at the spirit of the repartee. She was not so much loved as worshiped, and not so much worshiped as she was flattered with an almost obsequious deference.

Anthony Vanderpyl, of all the men round her, knew how to meet her as an equal. He was taller than she and of as good a family, while the tragedy in his life threw over him an atmosphere not without its value. Moreover, he bore in his face that romantic look which men seem to have brought back from the Civil War. It gave to a head which the French would have called *une tête de coiffeur* that something virile and modest and dreamy and sad which belongs to people who have "seen

things." In his profound eyes one caught the shadows of men marching, falling, and dying. Even the upward curve of his dark mustache, and the strip of close-clipped side whisker before each ear, were oddly fraught with heart-breaking partings and noble strifes in the way that touches sympathies. The fact, too, that his right arm was then and for a year afterward carried in a sling was not without its appeal to a woman who demanded that the man she loved should already have proved himself worthy.

In the almost literal sense of the words Cornelia Mercer threw herself at his feet. Seeing that her position in New York might have been compared to that of a queen regnant, she was not ashamed of making the advances. For the first time in her life, it seemed to her, she had met a man for whom duty and honor meant more than safety and money, and who could give her in the way of character more than she herself possessed. She and everything she owned were, therefore, at his disposal. On his part he accepted all with the high distinc-

tion of one who knows himself master—an attitude from which he never receded, not at the very worst of times, to the hour of his death.

So the Mercer money went to the restoration of the Vanderpyls. The second, third, and fourth sons being either in the army or in business in the West, it was on Lewis, the youngest, that the eldest brother's newly acquired fortune was expended. Lewis went to Yale in all the style of a rich man's son. His failures and escapades were regarded with indulgence. Even when he married Georgina Nugent, the daughter of an impoverished clergyman in New Haven, the folly was forgiven him. It was wholly forgotten when his wife began to bear him sons. The first real chagrin in Cornelia Vanderpyl's life was in being made to feel the reproach of childlessness. It came to her as a discovery that the primary passion in her husband's life was for the welfare and perpetuation of the name of Vanderpyl.

In its way it was a terrible discovery, since it made her no more than a means to an end.

There were hours, there were days, when she told herself that notwithstanding her pride and her astuteness she had been tricked. But love is a harsh conqueror, and it broke her revolt. She came to doing what she would never have supposed herself equal to—to submitting to this new dictation without saying anything about it. She brought herself to fussing over Lewis's two boys because Anthony did it. When after an interval of years Georgina was born and Mrs. Lewis died, she twisted and forced and tamed her nature into acting as a mother to the three motherless children because Anthony expected it. It was the first cup of gall and wormwood that had ever been put to her lips, but she flattered herself that she swallowed it without a grimace.

When Lewis himself died—the Vanderpyls were not a long-lived race—and Anthony exclaimed, almost gloatingly, "They're my children now!" she compelled herself to echo his tone with the words: "And they're my children, too." They had built the house between Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Streets by that

time, and she enjoyed its spacious solitudes. They gave her the largeness of setting that became her, in which she could entertain with a hint of regality. The coming into the house of two noisy boys and a crying baby girl not only broke into its peace, but destroyed that imposing unity of life which had become a necessity. Gallantly, without a murmur, she bent her will to it. Anything to keep Anthony!

Anything to keep Anthony! She had come to using the argument as a formula. She was over fifty now, and Anthony not much past forty-five. Moreover, like most people who mature early, he had moved but little beyond what he had been at the close of the Civil War. In the late 'eighties his figure was still lithe and spare. No gray had touched his mustache or those strips of close-clipped side whisker which at that day and date had already become as souvenirs of a greater and more romantic time. In his profound eyes one still caught the shadows of men marching and falling and dy-

ing. His virile and modest and dreamy and sad demeanor continued to be that of the man who has "seen things." His wife loved him to desperation—loved him with a more frantic devotion in proportion as she saw herself a person whom others didn't love spontaneously.

That perception had been coming for some years. As the brilliancy of the complexion paled the hardness of the eye grew more apparent; as the wit of her repartee tended to become a mere laying down of law, the iciness of the voice was manifest. Being one of the two or three most important women in New York, she maintained her position of authority; and yet she could see more and more plainly as time went on that in the intimate things, in those that imply friendship, affection, and regard, the desert was all round her.

Then the tragedies followed rapidly. She never quite knew how she learned that Anthony had a mistress. She never surprised the secret, nor did anyone ever tell her. The knowledge seemed to have come of its own accord, by a process of divination. She went

through months during which she called on all the forces she had ever heard of to help her to ignore outwardly that which inwardly was eating out her heart. Anthony never knew that she knew. He never knew it when she learned that there had been not only one other woman in his life, but two and three. When he died she had the consolation of remembering that she had never humiliated herself by so much as a word, that the mask of silence and pride had never once been taken off.

He bequeathed her the three Vanderpyls. It was almost his only legacy. At sixty she found herself mother to two hulking young men and a little girl—none of them her own. While making no secret of her dislike to them, she accepted the responsibility. It was what Anthony would have wanted, and she was still under his domination. She had practically promised him on his deathbed to do for them what he himself would have done, and to make them her heirs.

To this task she applied herself with an ex-

actness in which there was never a pretense at any other motive than one of moral compulsion. She was not vulgar or ungenerous; she never stinted them nor made them feel they were a burden, while on occasions of misconduct she rarely so much as complained. The boys were sent to Yale; the girl had the advantages of any other girl in her station. It was only little by little, as she grew old and her life of necessity became shut into the circle of their interests, that her hatred toward them showed itself as implacable. In proportion as she put less and less restraint upon herself she perceived that they repaid her with ridicule and scorn.

They could only flout her silently, but silently they flouted her. To her intentions for their future they presented a passive resistance before which she was helpless. It was impossible to make a banker of the elder brother or a diplomatist of the younger. Lewis ended by doing nothing, for the reason that there was nothing he could do. After he had defied his aunt's authority by marrying Mary Bracegir-

dle, a little nobody whom he had met at a dance in the country, he lived, God knew how, on the prospects of his inheritance. With Nugent her success was no greater, since, in spite of all her influence in high quarters and the wires she could pull, he aimed at nothing worthier than city politics. Between Georgina and herself the antagonism was bitterest; though it was from the girl's quiet, insolent retorts that she learned the degree to which all three of the Vanderpyls considered themselves wronged out of a large income by her own capacity for "hanging on." She pardoned much to Georgina for the sake of the glee which these betrayals afforded her.

And now it was all over. Even the looking backward and the summing up were done. The great fiasco of life, as she called it to herself, had proved a fiasco and no more. It had begun with so much promise and it was ending—in this. There was no longer a being left in the world to be afraid of her. She didn't ask for love. Since it had never been given her—

not even by Anthony—she rejected the desire for it with scorn. But she had counted on fear's going with her right up to the gates of the tomb; and even that was failing her.

When three o'clock had become four, and four had become five, and her faculties swooped and swam as though they were no longer a part of her, she was, nevertheless, able to note the fact that her departure had been discounted, and that in the opinion of those who were waiting the last breath she was already as good as gone. Molly had retired to the chintz-covered couch, which had been pushed to a distance from the bed, and was quietly dozing. Lewis sat beside his wife, while Nugent had ceased his tiptoeing about the room to draw up a chair and chat in low tones with his brother, probably as to the date of the funeral. Georgina was leaning over the foot of the bed, studying the still features with that fascination which approaching death rarely fails to command. But no one was afraid of the dying old woman any more. The last remnant of her power had passed away.

When Lewis had forsaken the armchair beside the bed Lizzie Pentreath had crept forward and dropped into it. She no longer asked her foolish, affectionate questions. Old Mrs. Vanderpyl noted that, too, and knew that even Lizzie considered her out of human reach. With large eyes hollowed by much weeping, and tender face straining toward the fixed upturned profile of her mistress, she seemed infinitely grief-stricken and sorrowful. At the sight of this doglike fidelity going with her still, when everything else that was mortal had turned back from her, the dying woman was, perhaps for the first time in her life, humbly and consciously grateful.

It was a little after five when old Mrs. Vanderpyl became aware that her mind went into spaces of eclipse. There were blank spots. She advanced rapidly, with a kind of physical rushing onward, only to reach phases of total darkness, out of which she emerged to find herself lying peacefully in bed.

"I must be really dying now," she said to

herself. "I suppose something tremendous will happen soon. I wonder if it will hurt."

Her minutes of recovery had the quality of returns—of returns after absences which she might have considered long had it not been for the condition of the room with its waiting figures and dim, shaded lights. But she couldn't stay with them. Again she felt herself advancing—rapidly—far. She seemed also to be sinking. She couldn't call it falling, because the action was so lulling and so sweet. It was really a delicious sensation, this of wonderful withdrawing, of traveling with incredible swiftness over spaces not to be measured by miles—only to come back with equal speed and find these commonplace living things so listless, so dull, so incapable of doing more than wait sleepily for death and dawn and breakfast. It was amusing to her that they should regard her as weak or pitiable or as at the vanishing point of existence, when, as a matter of fact, the wings of the morning had already been given her and she moved with ease among the spheres.

At intervals the nurse rose from the chair where she had seated herself wearily, looked, listened, felt the wrist, felt the brow, shaking her head despairingly at the brothers and Georgina. The patient, however, could regard this dumb show as no more than a funny pantomime, seeing that each instant she felt herself stronger and more and more free.

There was not much change from this. She sank with an exquisite sense of comfort, or she rose and soared triumphantly—or she knew nothing at all. The process was repeated not once, nor twice, but as it might have been an infinite number of times with an infinite variety of experiences. When she came back to the room it was always as if from some far, exciting journey in which there were marvels and delights. Always, too, the stupid creatures who were not dying were in the same places, doing the same things, compassed with sodden limitations which she herself had passed beyond.

She continued to feel scorn of them, but something new had come into her conscious-

ness. She hated them less; she was more tolerant of their existence. She could hardly distinguish her sentiments from those of a contemptuous, benevolent pity.

Suddenly there was a change. Toward six o'clock the nurse had risen for one of her periodical examinations. Then Lizzie Pentreath had fallen on her knees beside the bed, burying her face with a low, heartfelt sob. Lewis and Nugent bounded from their chairs and hurried forward. Georgina trailed slowly round from the foot of the bed with an incredulous "No!" in which one could hear both surprise and relief.

All were doing something but Molly Vanderpyl, who was still on the chintz-covered couch, breathing lightly, with lips a little parted.

Curiously enough, old Mrs. Vanderpyl found herself looking down on Lewis's wife. She felt some astonishment in the fact that she was doing so kindly. She had never looked in this way at Molly Vanderpyl before, nor done

justice to her sweetness and prettiness. For the first time since the marriage she understood why a great, clumsy, fatuous fellow like Lewis should love her so devotedly. With the thought there came a queer little aching twinge with regard to the purposes she had cherished with so much amusement.

She seemed to turn—though the action was not so much a physical turning as it was a direction of the mind. She was surprised, yet not surprised, to find herself at a distance from the great canopied bed she had occupied so long, round which the others were converging with the same eager, inquiring look in all their faces.

She herself felt the impulse to press forward —it was only thus that she could describe the prompting—and see what they were seeing.

What they were seeing was a delicate, upturned, hook-nosed profile, with exquisite drooped lids—two long, thin, wrinkled, graceful hands lying outside the filmy coverlet—and the lines of a slender, wasted form.

Then old Mrs. Vanderpyl perceived that the

expected transition had taken place without her knowing it, and understood that she was dead.

II

Old Mrs. Vanderpyl understood that she was dead, but if she was startled by this discovery it was not in any way that could be called violent. The change had been too gradual for that; the preparation had been too long. It was the preparation not only of the last few hours, but of the last few years. Ever since her seventy-fifth birthday she had been in the habit of saying, "I can't expect many more." Walt Whitman's "Give me your tone, O death, that I may accord with it" had become her favorite reading. She preferred it to "Jerusalem the Golden," or to any other of those effusions of piety which she regarded as theatrical. The absence of the theatrical in her present condition was the first gratifying surprise to her.

"So there *is* a future life after all!"

She made the observation deliberately, com-

placently. She had always believed that there would be, though the chosen formula of "Something—somewhere" expressed perhaps the limits of her faith. The "Something" was that she remained herself, Cornelia Vanderpyl; the "Somewhere" was her own room with its familiar furnishings. It was comforting to be still within its walls and not to be rushed off to those glorious celestial strangenesses which supplied the theme to so much hymnology. Even that rapid advancing and receding which had given her an ecstasy in dying was over now, and she felt herself firmly and permanently established. She was Cornelia Vanderpyl—Cornelia Mercer. She could not have said that she was either young or old. Age had become suddenly a word without a meaning. She was herself—simply—strong and free. Between her and the slim, composed figure in the bed . . .

But they were turning away from it. Lewis went first, slipping softly to the couch to wake his wife and give her the news. Molly rubbed

her eyes and stumbled to her feet, casting one hurried, frightened glance toward the bed.

But Lewis's arm was round her. "No, dear, no. Better come away."

Cornelia Vanderpyl felt the impulse to go after them, to speak to them kindly, to tell them there was nothing to be afraid of; but somehow, and quite oddly, they seemed to pass beyond her ken.

Nugent and Georgina retired calmly, whispering together of undertakers, sextons, and clergymen. For the first time in her experience Cornelia Vanderpyl felt apologetic toward them, sorry for the trouble she was giving them. She would have told them so, only that they, too, were in a sphere with which she was unable to communicate. It was this inability which more than anything else she found disconcerting, troubling.

Deftly and swiftly the nurse attended to small details of her task about the bed, smoothing the pillows, straightening the coverlet, and putting away bottles and glasses for which there was no longer any use. Cornelia Van-

derpyl noticed that the features were sweet, the intentions kindly. She was surprised not to have made the discovery before. When the woman had come to her two months earlier her greeting had been: "Are you as stupid as every other nurse? I suppose you are." Beyond that she had hardly ever addressed a word to her except to utter a complaint. She was sorry now; she would have liked to make amends; but when she tried to speak the vocal cords no longer responded to her will. As the nurse proceeded to raise the head lying on the pillow and loosen the strands of white hair in which there was a lingering gleam of gold, spreading it out widely and thinly, she neither saw nor heard. This duty done, she turned with a murmured word or two to Lizzie Pentreath, who was still on her knees, after which she, too, went softly from the room.

Left alone, Lizzie drew to herself one of the wrinkled old hands and kissed it. Then she rose, gazing long at the form on the bed, over which she seemed to be praying. When her

turn came to withdraw, Cornelia Vanderpyl moved in front of her.

"Lizzie!"

But Lizzie continued her way onward.

"Lizzie!"

Lizzie paused only to turn out one of the useless lights, after which she resumed her walk.

Cornelia Vanderpyl made a third and more eager attempt:

"Lizzie! I want to speak to you."

The effect of this appeal was that Lizzie paused—glanced back at the bed—retraced a step or two toward it—gazed at the still form with its aureole of gold-white hair—and turning again walked swiftly, as if frightened, beyond that barrier which Cornelia Vanderpyl couldn't pass.

They had all gone now, and she was alone with what had once been herself. She had no fear—only a vague melancholy. It was all so different from what she had been led to expect, as far as she had been led to expect anything. There were no angels, and no com-

forting reunions with those who had preceded her. To see Anthony, or her mother, or even Charlie Evans, would have given her a measure of assurance.

No, she was not afraid; but she was lonely. She would have been glad of the companionship of anyone. She yearned after those whom she had just forsaken, or who had forsaken her. Lewis and Nugent! Molly and the nurse! Lizzie and Georgina! She found herself clinging to them, longing for them, aching for some channel through which to make this known to them.

She would go after them; they had only that minute left the room. She would tell them that she saw them now as they really were—not as she had supposed when she had looked at them through the distorted vision of mortality. Lewis was so fine a fellow—not brilliant, of course, but honest and faithful and loyal. Nugent was so sturdy and sane, so manly, so upright, so eager to free the city of his birth from self-seeking depredation. Georgina was frank and straightforward, devoted

to the death to those she loved and who loved her. And Lizzie! Dear, saintly, doglike Lizzie! What charm had been in her affection, what strength in her gentleness, what sweetness in her voice and smile! She wanted them all. She was eager, now that she saw, to reverse the old order. She had left a will. . . .

She must rectify that. A sudden fear swept over her. It was not like the fear to which she had been accustomed, a fear that struck the heart and nerves. It was a new fear, a fear that entered into every part of whatever she had become. She was all fear, to a degree to which she had not hitherto thought possible. It occurred to her that in being released from the material she was released from material restrictions—that in finding a new and amazing capacity to live she had found a new and amazing capacity to suffer.

"I'm suffering!"

It was another new discovery. There was so much that was beautiful in her state that it was strange that suffering should be a part of

it. It was extraordinary, too, how quick a revulsion there could be in a point of view. What had happened had not been much. She had died—but that had proved to be a simple thing, as natural as waking after sleep, as spring after snow. The others were probably thinking of her as unfortunate, and calling her "Poor Aunt Cornelia"; but she was "Poor Aunt Cornelia" only in the sense that she had begun to see the outrageous follies of which old Mrs. Vanderpyl had been capable.

She looked at old Mrs. Vanderpyl lying in the bed—her profile upturned, her hands lying rigid, her gleaming hair outspread. She was the past, the erroneous, the hurtful. It was astonishing how far she—Cornelia Mercer, or whoever she was!—had been removed from the hurtful. It was the hurtful that was the fearful, and it was with the fearful that she felt herself penetrated through and through.

It was while she was thinking these things, if thought the process could be called, that a light struck on the hair that had been that of old Mrs. Vanderpyl. It responded instantane-

ously; it grew wholly golden; it grew young. The features, too, grew young. The hands grew young. The lines of the figure under the coverlet grew young. What had been a body turned, under the gaze of the being who had worn it, first into light—and then into nothing. It could hardly be said to have disappeared, unless it was as the colors of dawn disappear in the fullness of day. That which consciousness had created consciousness relinquished—and all went.

All went that had sprung of consciousness as consciousness began to uncreate. Not only the body went, but the bed, and not only the bed, but the room, and not only the room, but the house. In proportion as she who had been Cornelia Vanderpyl lost her hold on the material, the material dissolved. Since it was no longer needed, it was no longer there. She could do without it. What she already recognized as anguish was only in the second place connected with the physical.

And yet full perception came only by degrees. Being, as consciousness still expressed

it, outside the house, she expected at least to find New York. In that part of Fifth Avenue she knew exactly what she ought to see. There would be a great hotel—there would be shops and offices—there would be the line of the street running uphill or downhill according to the way one looked—there would be vast shadows in the distance, spire and tower and cube—there would be on earth and in the sky the pallid lights that herald daybreak. But there was nothing. If in the experiences through which she was passing there was one that could be called a shock, it was in understanding that New York, too, was but a creation of the consciousness. That that should be true of old Mrs. Vanderpyl—that it should be true of her room, her house, and of everything she possessed—was comprehensible. But that it should be true of that stupendous Manhattan, founded on rock, buttressed with money, built up story on story and pile upon pile, was startling. That all that was steel and stone and gold should have had no reality but that which the mortal mind had given it

was so inconceivable that she looked persistently and eagerly for the teeming island of her birth, and found there nothing but darkness.

That was her next cognition—that of darkness. It was darkness without a ray, darkness which, as the Bible put it, could be felt. It was not alarming; it was only desolating and discomfiting.

Even so, she understood that it had no relation to the physical darkness with which she had hitherto been familiar, but that it proceeded from within.

She was inclined to be indignant at this knowledge, rather than humbled or repentant. After all, she had been a great woman in her day and generation. She might have expected some concession. What was it she had been accustomed to hear? That in this situation there was generally an angel, or some initiated relative, to act as a guide. But here she was left to find her own way, alone, neglected, and ignored. Where were Lewis and Nugent? Lizzie and Molly and Georgina? What would

she not have given to catch a glimpse of any one of them! How were they thinking of her? What madness would seize on them as soon as they learned of her purposes? How would they ever bear what she was about to bring on them?

And how was she to bear it herself? That, after all, was the vital question. To them it was but a temporal matter; to her it entered into the conditions of eternity. What she had done she had done in full command of her faculties, considering herself cleverer than the majority of women. She had turned from the respectable old lawyer who had managed her business for years, as soon as he began to protest against the provisions of her will, going then to a wretch whom she never would have employed had he not lent himself to her purposes. Even he had warned her that such a testament could be attacked, though he pointed out the fact that if the Vanderpyl heirs were to have it disallowed they would get nothing at all, not being her blood relatives. She

remembered the joy with which she saw she would place them thus between the deep sea and the devil, and oblige them to take their choice.

"This must be hell," was the reflection that came to her. "This must be what they call the lake of fire and brimstone—and I've no one but myself to thank for getting into it."

She had little or no sense of time. Time was already to some degree the attribute of an outlived state of mind. There would be no yesterdays nor tomorrows in the new state of existence, but she was still near enough to the past to know they obtained in that from which she had emerged. There would be a moment when they would learn what was in her will—but that moment was not yet.

If in the meanwhile she could destroy the document there was an earlier one in the hands of her old lawyer friend that would then come into operation. It was not generous, but it was incomparably more generous than this. Could she only return by the way she had come she might undo the ill she had prepared

before it could be sprung on its victims. If, as it seemed, all was the effect of mind, then mind might recreate what it had uncreated.

She gave herself to that. Place and distance having gone the way of time, she was no longer hampered by either. Because of this she suddenly found herself back in the library of her house in Fifth Avenue.

It was night, apparently, as the mortal world reckoned night, but mortal light and darkness were neither helps nor hindrances to sight. All in the room was as it had been for years. If there was a difference, it lay in the tremulous unreality of things which had once seemed solid and stable. If mind had reconstructed them it was with the uncertainty pertaining to that which is essentially made of dreams.

She knew what she had to do. In a secret drawer was a key that unlocked a safe which was also in the room. With her thought so strongly fixed on the key it was a matter of course that she should see it shining in its hiding place. The desk had not been unlocked,

nor the intervening objects removed, but there it was.

Her difficulty came in seizing it. When she made the attempt she seemed to lack the means. With alarm she began to understand that between the spiritual and the material there was a gulf that might not be crossed. To rebuild the material was one thing; to make use of it was another.

To the agony of remorse she added now the exasperation of powerlessness. That things so trifling as a key and a sheet of paper should defy good intentions was enough to drive her to frenzy.

And yet mortal hands could handle them! If she could get aid!

She found herself in the room where Nugent was sleeping soundly. He had gone into chambers of his own on taking up with business and politics, but doubtless because of what had happened he was in his old room at home in order that Lizzie and Georgina should feel that there was a man in the house.

"Nugent!" she called. "Nugent!"

But Nugent slept and snored and made no response.

She seemed to herself to be holding out her hands imploringly. "Nugent! Nugent!" But still Nugent slept and snored.

She was in Georgina's room. Georgina, too, was asleep, her thick hair waving on the pillow, an arm tossed with a wild gesture on the rose-colored eiderdown quilt. "Georgina! Dear Georgina!" But there was the same silence, the same indifference.

Lizzie Pentreath's room was at the top of the house—an austere white room like the chamber of the Blessed Virgin in an old Flemish picture. As her concentrated thought reproduced it, with Lizzie lying rigid and composed in the small nunnerylike bed, Cornelia Vanderpyl felt in a measure reassured and comforted. Here was goodness; here was love; here, if anywhere, she would get help.

She didn't speak; she waited. Her yearning was so great that it seemed as if Lizzie must

wake and respond to it. But Lizzie only stirred.

She stirred restlessly. Then she murmured in her sleep:

"Yes, Cornelia, I'm coming. Tell me what you want me to do."

Eagerly, volubly, Cornelia Vanderpyl poured out her request. Lizzie was to take the key she knew of; she was to find the will; she was to burn it. There was another will which she, the testatrix, wished to have go into effect automatically.

Lizzie woke with a start and sat up.

"Is anyone there?" she asked, peering into the darkness.

"Yes, Lizzie; I am—Cornelia. Oh, don't be afraid of me!"

"Is anyone there?" Lizzie demanded again, more terrified.

"Yes, Lizzie. Cornelia is here. I've found the way back."

But Lizzie still peered into what for her was the night, drawing a long, frightened breath.

Putting out her hand, she fumbled for the electric light beside the bed—and once more all faded away, and Cornelia Vanderpyl found herself in darkness.

She was in darkness and again outside the range of place and space and time.

Out of her being there went up a cry, to what she hardly knew. "Oh, help me! I'm not worthy of help—but help me! There must be such a thing as Love. But how can I find it? How can I make use of it? I've lived for hatred. I've done thousands of hateful things —and one more hateful than all the rest. But in Love there must be ways by which I can make amends."

As if in answer to this call there dawned a far, barely perceptible streak of light. It was made not so much of flame as of color, and yet of color such as she had never seen on earth. She could not have said where it was in any language that would indicate locality. Like the darkness that had shut down on her it proceeded from within.

She was back in her house in Fifth Avenue. She judged that it was morning, though morning and evening had become to her words without significance. Lizzie and Georgina were at breakfast, and Nugent was entering the room. He was cheerful, clean, and rosy, his tribute to his aunt's demise being a black tie. Lizzie, too, wore black, though that was as usual, and Georgina a filmy white peignoir.

"Slept like a top," Nugent announced briskly as he took his seat at table.

"So did I," Georgina stated, in her slow, trailing tone.

Lizzie was silent for a minute, admitting at last that she had had a dreadful dream.

"I dreamt Cornelia had come back—"

Nugent guffawed.

"That was a nightmare!"

"Nugent!" Georgina reprimanded with mock severity. "How shocking! And the poor thing not buried yet!"

Lizzie continued:

"I thought she was trying to make me some sort of explanation—"

"I was, Lizzie," Cornelia Vanderpyl endeavored to interpose. "I was beside your bed—"

"Did she really seem to speak?" Georgina asked listlessly.

"It wasn't anything I could understand. She wanted me to do something—"

"She'd be sure to want that," Nugent laughed again, "wherever she is. If she couldn't keep people busy there'd be war in heaven. Reminds me of the story told of one of the young English princes. 'Will nobody bob to grandmamma in heaven? She won't like it if they don't, you know.' Poor old Aunt Cornelia won't like it if they don't, you know."

Georgina joined in the laugh, but Lizzie's lip quivered.

"If there was anything I could do for the poor darling—"

"Oh, but, Lizzie, there is."

It was agony to Cornelia Vanderpyl that they shouldn't see and hear her. It was not as if she was dead in any sense that made her less a living being than themselves.

"I shouldn't make my life bitter over that, Cousin Lizzie. You don't owe her anything, any more than the rest of us."

"We all owe her love, Nugent."

Nugent shouted.

"Love! Well, I should worry! That's the last thing."

"No, it's the first thing. We ought to repay her in some way for all she's done for us—and it's the only thing we've got to do it with."

Nugent, who was in high spirits, laughed again.

"Cousin Lizzie, you remind me of the old Scotchwoman in Dean Ramsay's tales, who, when there was nothing left to pray for, begged that the Lord would have mercy on the poor de'il."

"I need love, Nugent," Cornelia Vanderpyl cried, in the vain hope of making herself heard. "It's all that can do me any good."

"I could have been fond of her," Georgina drawled musingly, "if she had ever let me; but she never did. She was so stately and

grand that I was all ready to worship her when I was a little girl. But if I ever showed it she pushed me away. It used to give me the most awful crying spells. You remember, Cousin Lizzie? If you hadn't been here to comfort me I should have died."

"If Cousin Lizzie hadn't been here," Nugent declared, indorsing his sister, "I should have run away to sea at fourteen. Aunt Cornelia, poor old girl, wasn't stingy with money; but how she could make you smart in taking it. Even now—" he looked from the one to the other and lowered his tone—"even now I can't get over the feeling that she's going to play some ghastly trick on us."

They knew what he meant. Though they never did more than refer to it distantly, their thoughts were all on the will. Lizzie undertook to reassure them.

"Oh no, dears! She'd never have done a thing like that. She's told me so often—"

But the power of holding to the material failed the being who could do it only by great

effort and from time to time. Once more she was alone in the darkness.

That is, it was darkness except for that dim streak of light that was like no dawn in the mortal universe. Dawn in the mortal universe is cold, remote, impersonal. This light was alive and part of herself. Far away as it kept itself, and shedding no ray on the night immediately surrounding her, it was, nevertheless, companionable and encouraging. Without it she would have had less heart for her task.

That task was still to obtain help. The intensity of her desire was such that she was again able to recreate Lizzie's virginal white chamber and stand by her bed.

"Oh, Lizzie, listen to me; try to understand me. I'm in hell, Lizzie, and you could do something to get me out."

There was no response. Lizzie slept peacefully, the moonlight across her bed.

"I can tell you what hell is, Lizzie. It's being able to see with clear eyes instead of with blurred ones. It's knowing all that was pos-

sible and all one has missed. It's not inflicted on you; you inflict it on yourself. It's inevitable; it's what you are. Oh, Lizzie, wake up! Help me!"

But Lizzie only muttered and moaned in her sleep, making inarticulate sounds of affection and willingness to aid that were useless as practical assistance. Cornelia Vanderpyl could only wait for the great catastrophe. She had prepared it for others; but it was to fall on herself.

It was because of her own share in it that she was present as a spectator when what she had jocosely called her purposes were finally worked out. Being indifferent to all other happenings in the mortal world, no more than a shadow of them crossed the threshold of her consciousness.

Fear summoned her, a passionate, devouring fear, when, in the twilight of a winter's day, six figures dressed in black assembled in the library of the house in Fifth Avenue.

They came from laying what they called

her "mortal remains" beside the spot where she had placed those of Anthony Vanderpyl twenty-six years before. That to her was of no importance. It belonged to the realm of mortal dream, of unreality, of nothingness. She cared for it no more than if they had buried a lot of her old clothes. Her sole preoccupations now were love and hate and good and evil. All she knew of the atmosphere into which she had passed was that it had become abhorrent that hate and evil, or anything that sprang of them, should enter into it. To be associated with them was a torture, a madness. The only elements in which she could exist without anguish were those that kindled the distant light which had dawned within. But even that had begun to add sharpness to her misery, since it revealed possibilities of harmony and bliss, of knowledge and activity, from which she was cut off—an Abraham's bosom to which she could never attain. None the less, her yearning for it was so great that on reconstructing the conditions of mortality she came close to Lizzie Pentreath instinctively.

Lizzie was seated on a sofa. She had taken off her coat and gloves and thrown back the black veil that made a peak, like the headdress of a nun, over her close-fitting, old-fashioned bonnet. Georgina in her voluminous mourning was a graceful, languid figure, like a grand duchess in grief. Mrs. Lewis Vanderpyl emphasized the remoteness of her connection by a large, dashing black hat, worn at a rakish angle, and a dress short enough to display her pretty feet. Lewis, as usual, sat near her, dandling his silk hat on his knees. Nugent, doing his best to be self-possessed, stood with his back to the fire, his hands nervously flapping the tail of his frock coat. Though no one spoke, there was a sense of febrile tenseness in the air. Those eyes that were not fixed gravely on the floor were turned toward Jeremy Sinnott, the small, neat, elderly man of business whose firm had for years taken care of the late Mrs. Vanderpyl's property.

To Cornelia Vanderpyl the room itself was no more than a tremulous, insubstantial background for the figures that stood out against

it. They continued to be distinct when the inanimate was fading beyond her power of reproduction. It caused her some terrified impatience that Jeremy Sinnott should be so deliberate in his handling of the papers strewn before him on the big center table at which he sat; and yet when he began to speak she would gladly have silenced him.

The will he was about to read, he explained, was not that which he himself had prepared some eight years previously, but one the late Mrs. Vanderpyl had dictated and signed within the past twenty months. He had known of her intentions in this respect and had done his best to dissuade her from putting them into execution. He had gone so far as to refuse to draw the instrument up, though she had informed him that the project had been carried out, and had instructed him as to where the document would be found in the event of her demise.

No eyes were now fixed on the floor. All were turned with amazement and questioning

toward each other, and then to the lawyer as he began to read.

To Cornelia Vanderpyl it seemed as if the preamble, together with the enumeration of small legacies to public and charitable institutions, would never end. From the sheer clinging to her of mortal habit she felt that she must either break some vital organ or faint or go mad. The very suggestion threw her back on the fact that she was beyond such weaknesses, and the relief they brought, to all eternity.

Jeremy Sinnott came to the chief bequests.

To each of the Vanderpyls the sum of ten thousand dollars was left outright.

"To my cousin and constant companion, Elizabeth Pentreath, in recognition of her many years of faithful service"—a large sum of money. It was not an enormous sum, nor one which the other heirs considered more than just.

Then, with much legal phraseology, came the creation of a trust. It was of some hundreds of thousands of dollars the income of

which was to be paid "to my nephew, Lewis Anthony Vanderpyl, if at the end of two years from the date of my death he have divorced, or been divorced from, his present wife, Mary Bracegirdle Vanderpyl." Should Lewis Anthony and Mary Bracegirdle Vanderpyl still be legally man and wife when two years from the death of the testatrix had elapsed, the trust was to be terminated and the whole principal paid to Elizabeth Pentreath to be hers absolutely.

Lizzie's little scream "Oh, not to me!" gave utterance to the awe which was otherwise too dumbfounded for expression. Cornelia Vanderpyl threw herself on her cousin, round her, over her, enveloping her, like a cloud about a small black mountain pinnacle. The lawyer read on.

A second trust was created. It was similar to the first, though smaller in amount. It was in favor of Mary Bracegirdle Vanderpyl, if at the end of two years from the death of the testatrix she had either divorced, or been divorced from, her present husband, Lewis Anthony Vanderpyl. In case the conditions

were not fulfilled this trust was also to be terminated, and the principal to be paid absolutely to Elizabeth Pentreath.

Molly's tone was clear and decisive.

"You can have it now, Cousin Lizzie. I'll not take it. I'll starve first!"

Lewis gazed fixedly at the crown of his silk hat which he still dandled on his knees. Nugent and Georgina stared straight before them, as victims waiting their turn at the guillotine. Lizzie sat with head bowed, overwhelmed by this strange turn of fortune. Cornelia Vanderpyl hung over her, beseeching her. "Oh, Lizzie, don't you see? You can save me."

A third trust was similar to the first, both in spirit and in the amount of money it disposed of. If at the end of two years from the death of the testatrix Theodore Nugent Vanderpyl had renounced business and politics, and had entered on a diplomatic career, with the reasonable intention of making it a lifelong profession, as far as that was possible to an American citizen, he was to receive the same income as his elder brother. In case of the

nonfulfillment of the terms the trust was to end, and the principal to be paid absolutely to Elizabeth Pentreath.

In Georgina's case the conditions were different. A fourth trust, equal to that in favor of her brothers, was established on her behalf. Of this, so long as she remained unmarried, she was to receive the entire income. When she married the amount of the trust was to be reduced by half, the remaining half going to Elizabeth Pentreath. If she married one Francis Wallingford Stiles, the income paid to her was to cease, the trust to terminate, and the principal to follow the rest of the estate into the absolute possession of Elizabeth Pentreath, who was also named as residuary legatee.

Having read the names appended, the lawyer folded the document carefully, saying as he did so:

"The legality of this will can be contested. I've only to point out, however, that if it can't be probated the whole estate must go to Mrs. Vanderpyl's next of kin, who are the Mercers living in the State of Illinois."

It was the situation Cornelia Vanderpyl had contrived with ingenuity and anticipated with amusement. As to the legality of the will she hadn't cared a jot. She had wanted to put the Vanderpyls in a fix; and in a fix she had put them. Nothing had ever been more neatly carried out. She had them where they couldn't say a word.

They were literally silenced. The blows that had fallen had been far beyond expectation. Each one had often considered the possibility of receiving less than he or she had expected; but no one had foreseen this devilish exercise of choice. It was worse, in a way, than being entirely cut off. The fact that by following their lower impulses they could all in the end be relatively rich threw the burden of refusal on themselves. Not one of them had so far echoed Molly's generous repudiation. In ways to which she had never looked forward Cornelia Vanderpyl could see that a poison was working in their minds.

She lost them again—lost them to return to

her own blankness and helplessness. She began to see that time and place were relaxing their hold on her. Each effort to bring up again the mortal world was harder than the last. The only reality was in the blisses and activities and companionships she felt to be round her, but to which she had no key. A hint of them was occasionally borne to her, as a strain of music can be carried on a wandering wind; but there was no way she knew of by which she could enter into them.

But the old world was fading. It grew difficult for her to see so much as Lizzie's room. If by a mighty effort she carried herself back to it, it was as to a room made of moonbeams, all shimmering, shifting iridescences, with Lizzie herself as no more than a pale moonbeam form. When she came there, however, Lizzie never failed to be troubled, to toss restlessly, to mutter unintelligibly, though she didn't wake.

And when at last Cornelia Vanderpyl forced her way back to the midst of the assembled family, it was with a pain which she knew

could not be repeated many times more. It was again the library—but, as she would have said, a library made of mist. Walls, books, furnishings, had the changing, vanishing imagery of pictures seen in clouds. Even the living figures were tenuous and ghostlike.

Lizzie was again seated on the sofa, but in a house dress. Georgina reclined in an armchair, her profile pensively resting against her hand. Molly, with hands folded and feet crossed, took a determined, upright pose in a small gilded chair. It was Lewis who now held the stand before the fireplace, while Nugent tiptoed softly up and down the room.

"So that in two years' time the money would be all mine," Lizzie was saying tearily.

Georgina made the first response, speaking as though the matter were one to which she was indifferent.

"So far as I'm concerned, Cousin Lizzie, I'm going to marry Frank Stiles, and I'm going to do it soon. He's asked me to consider, and I have considered; but I'm not marrying him for money, nor he me."

Nugent still seemed to be arguing with himself as he paused in his movements to address the meeting.

"I can't give up my work, now can I? What sort of a figure should I cut in diplomatic life? They wouldn't have me, and I shouldn't be any good if they did. Money's all very well, but if it comes to that I can make it."

He resumed his tiptoeing, and for some minutes there was silence. No one looked at Lewis, though it was felt that it was his turn to speak. There were ways in which his renunciation would be greater than that of any of them, since he not only had no income but no definite profession.

"Well, I guess you're right, Cousin Lizzie," he said quietly, after what seemed long thinking. "In two years' time the money will be all yours. Molly and I are going to retire to the country and nest in a tree." With his hands on the arms of his chair as one about to rise he added: "Well, I guess that settles it all, doesn't it?"

But Lizzie sat still and wiped her eyes.

"I've been having a most dreadful time ever since poor Cornelia died. I don't want to be foolish, and I know I'm not a bit more superstitious than other people; and yet it seems to me as if she was always coming back."

Nugent dismissed this fancy.

"That's nerves, Cousin Lizzie."

"Yes, I dare say it is; and yet—and yet—I can't help feeling that poor Cornelia would like me to do something."

Nugent stopped abruptly to look down at the sweet old lady. Lewis, too, stared at her across the room. Georgina summoned her to declare herself more plainly.

"Do what, Cousin Lizzie?"

Lizzie faltered apologetically:

"You see, it's this way. I don't believe poor dear Cornelia meant to do any harm; and if she did I'm sure she's sorry for it now. I'm not superstitious, and yet. . . . But it's no use telling you. You wouldn't believe me. But if poor dear Cornelia hadn't died at all she couldn't be more really in this house than she's been for me ever since—ever since she

left us. And I know she's not happy. She wants me to do something; and I can't think what it would be unless it's . . . You see, dears, your poor aunt Cornelia never knew anything about love. She didn't. She was always afraid some one would marry her for her money, which was exactly what happened in the end. It was what your uncle Anthony did. She was devoted to him heart and soul; but when she found out that he had never really cared for her—and—and hadn't been true to her—you must forgive me for naming such a thing—it practically broke her heart. It warped her. It made her hard and cruel. She wanted to avenge herself on some one, and you poor innocent darlings were the easiest victims. . . . But now that she's in another world, where love must be the law if there's any other world at all, it's come to me—it's come to me just as if she whispered it in my ear—and begged me and implored me—but it's come to me that I can do what she herself would have done if she'd seen things

clearly—what I'm sure she'd like me to do as she sees things now. . . . And if, as you say, the money's to be all mine—and you'll trust me—"

The spring with which Georgina landed at Lizzie's feet was silent and swift, like that of some graceful feline animal.

"Oh, Cousin Lizzie, you darling!"

Nugent's voice shook as he warned her: "You mustn't be unjust to yourself."

"Oh, I'm nothing. Darling Cornelia has more than taken care of me for my lifetime by her first legacy. I shall be seventy-one my next birthday; and if you'll trust me—and let me talk to Mr. Sinnott about how I can patch it up—there must be ways—and I am fond of you, dears. . . . When you were all little it was as if I was your own mother. . . . Poor Cornelia didn't understand how to love or be loved by anyone. As far as I'm aware, no one ever did love her in all her eighty-two years—unless it was me—and I didn't count. But now that she sees what love is . . ."

And so to Cornelia Vanderpyl the mortal world went out. It went out like a landscape when the last ray of daylight has faded from its face. Where there had been something there was nothing, and she turned to the realities. Only, as she turned, there was more light.

It was light in which there was color, harmony, vitality. Much was still dark, and yet it was a growing light—a light that drew her, that cheered her, that made her hope—a light with attributes of fadelessness such as belong to no earthly dawn.

II

The Ghost's Story

"The universe shows us two aspects: on one side it is physically wasting, on the other side it is spiritually ascending."

—Alfred North Whitehead: *Religion in the Making.*

First Writing:

The girl who takes this down at my dictation cannot see me. She never heard of me. Except for the fact that I shall mention it, she would not know my name.

I have found her by chance.

Wandering, wandering, wandering, as if the wind of the summer blew me in its course, I have come on her in a garden above the Hudson, where the long suburbs of New York thin away toward the country. She is sitting in a summerhouse. On a table before her are pencils and paper. She holds a pencil in her hand, though she herself is talking and laughing with another girl who sits beside her knitting. Neither of them has felt my approach. Neither knows that I am here, till now that

the girl's hand begins to write in the manner they call automatic.

I am a ghost.

I am just such a ghost as you have heard about, read about, and talked about, as long as you can remember.

If you have seen me, you have probably been frightened. I am not sure whether you have seen me or not. Some people have.

Jim Rittenshaw saw me on the stairs of the New Netherlands Club. Daisy Rittenshaw saw me on the terrace of her house at Presbrey. Old Dr. Galloway saw me in the aisle of his church in Fifth Avenue. My daughter Connie saw me in the hall of our own home at Rhinefields. All of these had a reason to see me. But Harvey Breck saw me for no reason at all that I am aware of. He must be psychic, as the word goes among people who are not ghosts. Other people may have seen me, but I cannot be sure.

I like to be seen. When I am, I feel that fate has been to some extent transcended, that the inexorable law of death has been overruled.

I have never been resigned to the condition. I can hardly understand even now why I should be cut off from the world in which men are doing things. In all but the actuality of taking part, I am in New York. I haunt the spots in which my time was spent; I cannot wrest myself away from them. Of my many desires the strongest is to force my way in among the men, the women, and the interests which were all I ever cared for and are all I care for still.

So I like to be seen. Or rather, I should like it if those who saw me were not terrified. But why should I, Nicholas Desborough, freeze a man's blood just because he happens to catch a glimpse of me, when all our lives we have been accustomed to lunch and dine together, to go yachting and fishing together, to crack jokes, to exchange good stories, and to run in and out of each other's offices a dozen times a day? I am no different now. I am just as I was. I like the old faces and the old places—that is, I should like them, if you would let me in on things. But nobody does.

As an illustration of this let me tell you

what happened when Harvey Breck saw me at the New Netherlands Club. I am constantly there, notwithstanding the tragedy of which it was the scene. You might expect me to shun the place. But no! I like to return to it. I return to it as often as I can. How often that is I can scarcely say, for I am losing the power to reckon time.

But on the occasion of which I speak I was in the smoking room. It must have been late at night because with the exception of two or three widely scattered groups the place was empty. A number of *us* were there, however, moving about restlessly.

Let me say in passing that we always recognize one another; but we rarely hold communication. We don't want to. Our aims are concentrated on establishing touch with the world we have left behind. Those who are in the same plight as ourselves excite pity, but no desire for intercourse. However intimate we have been, we regard one another now with silent constraint and aloofness. So that evening there were in the smoking room a number

of the fellows I had known, bent on the same purpose as myself—that of getting back, of getting in, of having some one say, "Hello, old chap!" or give a friendly nod.

You have no idea how little we are changed. On that particular evening I could single out half a dozen men of whom I was uncertain at times as to whether they were among the so-called living or the so-called dead. With regard to those whom I had known well, I had, of course, no doubt. In their cases I had heard of the transition; I had even attended the funerals. But there were others at whom I had to look twice—three times—in order to fix their state to my satisfaction.

This I could always do after a little consideration. There are differences to be noted—and yet not differences apparent at a glance. For example, there was a fellow named Charlie Swett. I had known him for perhaps thirty years, without ever having known him well. He had been in his last year at St. Paul's when I arrived there as a kid, and in the same way I had been a few years behind him both at

Harvard and in New York. I had therefore never kept track of him; and now when I saw him with a party of six, as hearty, as hale, and as well dressed as any of them, I had to look closely before I could judge. It was a party, I say, of six. Four were playing bridge. Two were looking on. Of the two who were looking on, Charlie Swett was one. He sat with his arm thrown carelessly along the back of Tom Dallinger's chair, and was looking over his shoulder into his cards. The other looker-on was in relatively the same position behind old man Egerton; but while old man Egerton sometimes turned round and addressed a remark to his friend, Tom Dallinger never did so to Charlie Swett. He didn't know he was there. No one saw him but ourselves.

No one saw any of us but ourselves. And yet we were roaming about, all over the place, joining this group or that group or the other group, and getting next to old acquaintances, though always in the end turning away disconsolate. Charlie Swett had been a favorite with everyone. He had never gone anywhere

without finding a welcome. And yet here he was, ignored, unseen, unthought of. He was outwardly nonchalant; but I could read his dismay—the dismay I myself knew so well—at being left out forever.

So we moved from table to table in the persistent hope of being recognized. To us it seemed—unreasonably, I admit—that the fellows were as heartless in disregarding our presence as if it had been a put-up job. We could see them so perfectly! We could follow their conversations and watch their games! If they could only have suspected that we were wandering about, in every room of the club . . . !

And so when I saw a vacant armchair in a circle of men, every one of whom I had known more or less well, I dropped into it. In doing this I was attracted by the name of Jim Rittenshaw. It was a name which even among his friends was never pronounced now except with a mental shudder.

Ned Allenby was speaking, lolling back in his chair, a foot resting on a knee.

"It's all very well to talk of reconciliations; but the facts are the facts. He may go back to Presbrey; but he'll have a good deal to swallow in doing so."

"He won't be the only one who'll do the swallowing," Chase Holford yawned. "Somebody else will have to take a deuced bitter pill."

I knew the reference was to Daisy, though in a club her name could not be pronounced. I knew, too, what she and Jim were about to do, and as to it no longer had an emotion. That, at least, I had passed beyond. If I listened with interest, it was in the hope that my own name might come up. It might come up with some uncomplimentary expressions of opinion, but even that would be something. Other observations were along the same lines. They came from Dawson Rhodes, from Angus Macleod and from Phil Desmoulins. All agreed on the point that Jim and Daisy would find it difficult to patch the thing up again, even if their reunion was only in name.

Harvey Breck had said nothing. He was di-

rectly across the irregular circle from me, and seemed not to be following the talk. Stretched out in his chair, a cigar between his fingers, it seemed to me that he appeared bored.

Suddenly Breck leaped forward, leaning toward me, his eyes starting from his head.

"My God! look at that!"

But Angus Macleod laughed.

"Look at what?"

Harvey was on his feet—backing away from me. "It's Nick Desborough."

They were all on their feet now, looking not at me, but at Harvey.

"Nick—nothing!" came with a guffaw from Phil Desmoulins. "You've got 'em again, Harvey."

"I tell you I see him—right there in that chair."

"You're quite right, Harvey," I said. "But what in thunder have you to be afraid of?"

Dawson Rhodes came and shook Harvey by the shoulder.

"Wake up, old Harvey," he laughed. "You're like a dog that's been dreaming."

"He's gone," Harvey breathed with relief, though he continued to back away from what he took to be my empty chair. "But I swear to God, boys, I saw him!"

"Of course you saw him," Ned Allenby coaxed. "Now come along home with me, old top. We'll take a taxi."

"I—saw—him," Harvey affirmed with emphasis.

"Well, who the dickens is saying you didn't see him?" Chase Holford asked in his slow, yawning voice. "Sit down again, everybody, and let's have another drink."

But no one sat down. As a matter of fact, I saw that beneath the chaffing to which Harvey was subjected there was a queer uneasiness. My name, too, produced a mental shudder, perhaps more uncannily than Jim's.

Men left the other groups and came forward with, "What's the row?" on their lips.

"Saw Nick Desborough, did he? Well, that must have been a pretty sight."

"What did he look like, Harvey?"

"He looked just as he always did," Harvey

answered breathlessly. "Was dressed in a blue serge suit—"

"Had on a blue serge suit that afternoon!"

"And now he's got nothing to change to."

"Did he speak to you?"

"I saw his lips move, but I didn't hear anything. He smiled and nodded, too."

"That was civil of him."

"And seemed to know me."

"We all know you, Harvey, old friend, only not in just this shape."

"I tell you I *saw* him."

"Well, now, go home, like a good fellow, and sleep it off. We'll all go home."

Which was what they did. They melted away by twos and threes, jest and bravado in their tones, and something creepy in their hearts. Harvey Breck hadn't convinced them; and yet they were eager to get away.

Presently no one was left in the big dark building but a few attendants and ourselves.

We still wandered about the rooms desperately, homelessly.

We hate the hours between midnight and

morning, the hours in which the living go to bed and forget, but in which we are always awake remembering.

Second Writing:

I was born in New York, of what you would call a well-known and well-to-do family. The topics presented to my early mind were food, relations, playthings, and God.

Food and relations stayed by me of necessity. God and the playthings went together.

I remember well the day on which I discarded all lingering belief in a nonmaterial power. Jim Rittenshaw and I were walking out from Concord to St. Paul's. We talked of religion, as boys more often do than their elders perhaps suspect.

"Do you believe all that?" I asked anxiously of Jim.

"Not a damn' word," was his vigorous reply.

I must admit that the reply was a relief to me. I hadn't believed a "damn' word" of it, either, but I had never had the courage to de-

clare my skepticism. Now that some one else was brave enough to lead, I was willing to follow.

I was then perhaps fourteen years of age.

"Do you say your prayers?" Jim asked after we had tramped a little while in silence.

On that I hedged.

"I am not going to say them tonight."

And I didn't.

I never said prayers again. As I grew older, I formulated my unbelief into what you might call a creed. I did not believe in a God; I did not believe in the truth of the Bible; I did not believe in the unrighteousness of sin, or in the righteousness of what people called righteousness; I did not believe in virtue or pity or unselfishness; I did not believe in the future life of what is commonly described as a soul. If I had active beliefs, they might be summed up in the phrases "the survival of the fittest" and "every man for himself."

Talking things over together, as Jim and I did at intervals all through adolescence and early manhood, we came to the conclusion that

if there was nothing divine, then there was only the human. The human presented itself through our senses and desires. Since that was all there was, why not, as we expressed it, "go ahead"?

Ahead we went. We knew that considerations of health were important, and in that respect agreed to act as a restraint on each other. It was our nearest approach during bachelor days to anything of the nature of control.

We married in our late twenties.

My wife was Caroline Welland. One daughter was born when we had been married a little more than a year. We had no other children.

Jim married Daisy de Windt. She was a beautiful girl of eighteen, who took a dislike to me from the minute of introduction. On my part I admired, though I didn't like, her.

With some similar instinct my wife didn't care for Jim. After Connie's birth she grew nervous, anemic, suspicious. Loving me with an intense, jealous devotedness, she wanted me

to love her in the same way, and I couldn't. In proportion as she lost her health, she lost what beauty she had possessed—never very much—and we grew estranged.

My separation from Jim began with our two marriages. While there was no difference between us as men, our wives kept us apart. We met in clubs and offices, but no longer with the old familiarity. The thought of Daisy's disapproval was always in his mind, and in mine the thought of Caroline's. Neither of us would have admitted the fact to the other, but each knew it was there.

We lived through eighteen years like that. Then there came a change.

Jim began to seek me out. We went back to something like the intimacy of schoolboy days. We planned fishing and shooting excursions together, in winter in the South, in summer in Canada. Caroline was always unwilling to let me go, but I went. I learned by degrees that Daisy didn't care whether Jim went or not.

Thus in our late forties we came to a new period of freedom—mine through taking it by

main force, Jim's because his wife didn't want him. Whether he still cared anything for her or not I couldn't tell, because by a kind of tacit agreement we kept away from the subject of wives.

Our domestic establishments were similar, though not quite the same. Jim had an apartment in New York and a fine place at Presbrey on Long Island. We had a house in East Seventy-eighth Street and a farm at Rhinefields on the Hudson. Jim was therefore more conveniently situated than I for running in and out of town.

To that simple fact was due much of what afterward happened.

There was a day in the summer when he motored me out to Presbrey to lunch, to bring me back in time to catch an evening train for Rhinefields. The object of this trip was not less innocent than a comparison between his method of growing sugar beets and mine. That it should result as it did . . .!

I had not seen Jim's wife for nearly two years. She was now thirty-six, and more beau-

tiful than she had been when he married her. Moreover, she was childless, idle, bored, tired of luxury, tired of entertaining and being entertained, and above all tired of Jim. Outwardly haughty, cold, and distinguished, she was at heart as crazy as a gypsy for the wild and exciting.

I can only say that she saw me with other eyes than those of the young wife of eighteen. I saw her differently, too.

All that summer and the next winter we kept the new passion to ourselves. Neither Jim nor Caroline suspected it. If Daisy and I had qualms of honor, we steadied ourselves by a reference to our creeds. Jim had worked out a creed like mine, and had taught it to Daisy. Self was its law, and self-fulfillment, as we called it, its predominating impulse.

But by the second midsummer we agreed that the deception was getting on our nerves. It was not quite deception, either, for all our little world had come to know of our mutual situation with the exception of Caroline and

Jim. We reached a time when we agreed that they, too, must be enlightened.

Our plans were quite simple. On a given afternoon when Jim would be in town I was to motor out to Presbrey, nominally for a cup of tea, and she was to come away with me. After that we hoped that Jim and Caroline would take the necessary steps to give us legally to each other. We admitted that it was not a pretty plan, but there was no help for it. After all, it was no more than had been done by many another couple in New York who were now respectable citizens.

My first surprise came from a quarter whence I least expected anything of the kind. By what means Connie got wind of my projects I was never able to discover. I am inclined to think it was through a conspiracy of maids who passed the word along to her.

Connie was at this time seventeen—a lovely girl, but rigid, terrible, and her mother's champion. Under her clear-eyed, merciless scrutiny I had not for some months been at ease.

I was putting on my dustcoat one morning to motor to the station on my way to town, when she came out into the hall.

"Papa," she said without other leading up, "you're going to run away with Mrs. Rittenshaw."

I stood with one arm in a sleeve of the dustcoat and the other paralyzed. If the pavement of the hall had spoken and made the same accusation, I couldn't have been more amazed.

"Nonsense!" I began weakly.

"Oh, don't, papa!" she pleaded. "Don't run away from mamma! It would kill her!"

"Nonsense!" I said again. "What—what put such an idea into your head?"

I didn't want an answer to this question; I didn't care. All I asked was power to bolt from the house.

She allowed me to go without further questioning, though there was plenty of it in her eyes when I came back that afternoon. It was then a week before the date Daisy and I had set.

Two days later Connie returned to the attack.

"You're not going to do it, papa? Promise me you won't. Swear to me you won't."

But during the two days I had reflected. Since Connie, like everybody else, must know, I saw no use in lying to her. I didn't lie, though I didn't tell the truth. I simply didn't promise. When she saw I was determined not to promise, she begged no more. But the struggle remained between her and me. Her mother was not brought into it. I still saw that Caroline didn't know.

It was on a Thursday that Daisy and I had meant to go, and on returning to Rhinefields on the Wednesday afternoon for my last night there, I learned that Connie had gone to town. I thought it odd. I suspected that her visit had to do with me. But I was so near to the fulfillment of my plans that I gave it no further thought. On the following morning I went to New York, as for business reasons I did three or four times a week, leaving behind

me the impression that I should be home again in the evening.

A big limousine I had bought and was keeping for the purpose was to meet me at the club at three. It would take me an hour to drive out to Presbrey.

I entered the club at half-past two. I needed the time to compose the letter I meant to post to Caroline after I had left New York.

I cannot say I was not nervous. I was. I recall that I carried myself with the purposed steadiness of a man who has been drinking and is trying to show that he isn't drunk. I had a cheerful word for the man at the coat room. I shook hands with some fellows whom I met in the hall and whom it would have been more natural to pass with a nod. I knew that a day or two later, when the news went round, these would be remembered incidents, and I wanted to show—and to show myself—that I was doing the thing with *sang-froid*.

At the foot of the stairs, as I was ascending to the writing room, I happened to lift my eyes. There at the top was Jim. He was

looking down at me. It was an awkward meeting, one I would have given much to avoid, but there was no escape from facing it. I began going up.

I meant to say, "Hello, Jim," and pass on, leaving the incident at that.

But he himself came downward, meeting me about the middle of the stairway. As he paused, I was obliged to do likewise. He stood a step higher than myself.

I saw that he knew, and thought of Connie's visit to New York. He was white and grim and terrible.

"I was looking for you," he said, quietly but with a strange huskiness. "I was waiting for you. I know all about you."

I spoke as quietly as he, but more unsteadily.

"You don't know all about me, Jim. There are some things which, when I've told you—"

And then I saw the muzzle of a revolver which he whipped from his pocket and held not six inches from my head.

"You hound! Take that!"

I heard the words. I heard nothing else.

I felt nothing.

To the best of my knowledge I did nothing.

That frightful things happened there on the club stairway goes without saying; but they form no part of my consciousness.

My one thought was for Daisy.

"Who will tell her that I can't come for her?"

And then I found myself on the terrace at Presbrey.

Between seeing the shining muzzle of Jim's revolver and Daisy herself walking on the terrace with her back to me, there was not, so far as I am aware, the space of a second.

I didn't know what had happened. I had not had the time to put two and two together, nor to form so much as a theory. All I knew was that Daisy was there and that I must speak to her.

As she walked down the length of the terrace I followed her. I had not thought of what I should say or do, further than to warn her that Jim knew.

When she turned I was waiting, not ten paces away.

She threw up both hands as if she had been shot, and tottering forward with a shriek, fell with her face on the gravel.

Then Presbrey, with its trees and flowers and terraces and fountains, faded softly away.

Third Writing:

So I became a ghost.

I have given the foregoing facts in order that you may know the difference between a ghost and another man. It is one of consciousness, of the state of mind.

The great mistake which the so-called living make is in thinking that there awaits them a violent change to which they give the name of death. To some it is the end of all things; to others a new beginning. In reality it is neither; it is a continuation. The minutes are joined on to the minutes, the seconds to the seconds. Hopes, loves, fears, ambitions, pas-

sions, hates, are phases not of the body, but of the mind.

What we understand as death affects only that outer robe which is no essential part of the personality. That it is no essential part of the personality we see in the fact that a man of eighty feels himself identical with the man he was at eighteen, though probably no particle of his physical frame is the same. What makes the man is mind. What endures is mind. What inherits eternity is mind.

So in dying—I use the word in its accepted sense—I remained what I had been, with a change in condition but not in self. I was still the man who, had he lived a few hours longer, would have deserted his wife and run away with his best friend's. I need give no further illustration of my mental state, since it can be judged from that circumstance alone.

My first mad impulse was to rebel against the fact of being dead. It became evident at once that being dead didn't imply that I was less living than I had been; it meant only that I was cut off from my former pursuits. But my

former pursuits were everything to me. I had neither life nor will to live apart from them. With every nerve of what I had become I determined that I would not give them up. It might mean pitting my forces against those of all the universe, but if so I was willing to take the risk.

I strove.

I strove—but much as the captive strives when he dashes his head against the stone wall of his cell. My efforts were similar; the results were similar. I was too frantic to take utility and futility into consideration. I was driven, as I had always been driven, by blind, unreasoning self-will.

To get back, to cross the gulf, was my one overwhelming desire. Everything else merged itself into that. And lest this should seem too absolutely insane to you, let me say that I could not look upon myself as dead. By death I had always understood the end of being. But here I was, as active, as intelligent, as passionate as ever. I could reconstruct all I had taken to be real, even to my body and my clothes. My

home, my haunts, my family, my friends were all accessible to me. That is, I could see them; I could revisit them; I could do everything toward intercourse with the living but what depended on themselves. How could I consider myself dead? On the day of what they called my funeral I was present in the church and laughed. I laughed as an escaped prisoner might laugh who while hiding in the hedges watches the guards who are hunting him seize and carry off a scarecrow.

Otherwise it was a rather pitiable funeral. There were few in the church—my brother, the widow of another brother, a handful of men from clubs and offices who from some half-forgotten sympathy with the past honored my memory when perhaps they would not have honored me.

They had not taken the poor clay object to my home. Old Dr. Galloway, who had known my parents, and who married Caroline and me, offered it the hospitality of his church. There it lay till the time came to remove it, when he said over it such prayers as he thought permitted

by so hideous an end. He was a good man, and later that day I did my best to thank him.

But for the minute I was oppressed by the fact that neither my wife nor Connie was present at the ceremony. I could not resent this, and yet I felt it hard. I found myself thinking of them, yearning over them, regretting that I had not been to the one the husband, and to the other the father, I should and might have been.

It was a new proof that I was living that almost immediately I was in the hall at Rhinefields.

The house was still and silent.

It was mid-afternoon in summer. All the windows were open, and so were the doors right through from the front to the veranda and gardens at the back, below which ran the Hudson. Soft hills rose and dipped on the other bank, with houses nestling in the boscage. Over the countryside lay a still, warm silence. Beneath it the attentive ear, the spiritual ear, could hear the rich, continuous murmur of the myriad life of the forest and the farm.

Timidity kept me from intruding further into the house. I waited for a sign that might encourage me to go on.

Suddenly there was a sob. The sob rose into a kind of wail. I knew it was Caroline, and that the sound came from her room upstairs. I had forgotten till then that she believed that just at that minute I was being carried from a church in New York to be laid in a graveyard —and that she was not there.

Then, swiftly, Connie stole out of the library on my left. She too had heard the sob and was hurrying to bring comfort. She was in black—she paid me that tribute; but her sweet face was set, and her lovely eyes hard, with the kind of grief that is unforgiving.

"Connie!"

I moved before her as she was at the turn to run up the stairs.

She started back.

For a second or two I was afraid that she, too, might shriek and totter like Daisy Rittenshaw.

But she did neither. On the contrary, she

looked at me steadily. She didn't blench, seeing that it was impossible for her to become whiter than she was already. If there was any change, it was that her strong young face grew stronger.

I tried to plead; I did my best to ask for some sort of pardon; but she ran past me and up the stairs; and Rhinefields, like Presbrey, faded.

So I was roaming again.

Nothing is more alien either to earthly conceptions or to true spiritual immortality than this homeless, aimless wandering of ghosts. It is in many ways the bitterest ingredient in our cup of suffering. Perhaps it is that wandering more than any other one element of our hell that turns us at last into the way we rebel so utterly against taking.

Rhinefields having faded, Presbrey having faded, I was out in the world, with no rest, no duty, no shelter, no night.

I could do what anyone else could do. I could walk in the streets; I could go into shops; I could stand in the lobbies of hotels; I could

enter any of the clubs or places of business with which I was familiar. Nothing was really an obstacle; and always there was that will-o'-the-wisp of hope that I should get back and win a recognition.

In the end it was loneliness, loneliness and a kind of curiosity, that led me into St. Mary Magdalen's where I had seen my coffin in the afternoon.

It was now dusk. Though the door was open, there was no one in the church. That some one was in a sacristy or vestry I judged by the burning of a light.

In any great empty place there is a hushed solemnity at twilight, and especially in a church. The nave seemed the emptier to me now because of the people I had seen there a few hours earlier. They had gone back to take up the thread of their living interests, and I was in the first stage of being forgotten. I should not be forgotten at once; but each new day would make my memory a little less vivid to those for whom it had been a ruling note in life. Even Connie would remember me less

and less; Daisy would get over that awful minute on the terrace; and the only minds that would hold me close—each for a different set of reasons—would be Jim's and Caroline's.

The interior of the church was familiar to me. My parents had brought me here as a child. During my late boyhood and early manhood my mother had made helpless efforts to get me to continue my attendance. She seemed to think there was a magic in the practice that would ultimately save my soul.

I noted the pew in which we used to sit, though none of our family ever occupied it now. I looked up at the altar where Caroline and I had made our perhaps mistaken vows. I stood on the spot where the coffin had rested—where so many coffins had rested in the course of years!—when my friends had sighed over the scarecrow.

While I was standing there, I saw the light in the vestry extinguished. Out of the little room old Dr. Galloway appeared, his huge bulk rolling through the dimness. He came

forward and forward, and was presently before me.

Then he stopped suddenly, looking bewildered, awed.

Like Connie, he gazed at me steadily; but unlike Connie it was not relentlessly. It was kindly, pityingly.

Humbly, apologetically, I gazed back at him. We were not without memories in common. Not once nor twice but a good many times in my headstrong youth he had done his best to "get at me." He had not got at me, for the reason that I always made good my escape. He stood for the things I would have none of. Despising and rejecting them, I despised and rejected him along with them. But now . . .

I will not affirm that he spoke to me, but the point is of no importance. What I do declare is that his thoughts passed into my thoughts, whether with words or without them.

"Ah, poor boy," I translated, "you're unhappy! You'll continue to be unhappy as long as you cling to mortal unrealities. You're suffering, aren't you?"

In some manner which I do not understand I admitted that I was.

"But you're suffering purely because you persist in trying to do the wrong thing. You're looking for success along a road in which no success is possible. You've been given many lessons, and you will not learn them. Even this last lesson—this bitterest and most terrible of all—has taught you nothing. And yet until it does . . ."

By something blank and sorrowful that gradually overspread his face I knew the old man couldn't see me any more. I knew it, too, by the way in which he slipped into a pew beside me and fell upon his knees. I suppose he was praying for me, though I couldn't see what good his prayers would do me.

And yet vaguely I felt comforted. I felt more than comforted, since he had dropped a hint that there was another way. I didn't want the other way. I wanted nothing but my own way. Nevertheless, it was something to be told that there was an alternative. Hell is not the blackest or most hopeless hell so long

as one sees a possibility, however far and faint, of getting out.

Fourth Writing:

Time and place have been to me from the beginning sources of perplexity. I have tried to keep to the limitations set by both, but they slip away from me.

The sense of place went first. The fact that within a second or two of that fatal meeting with Jim Rittenshaw on the stairs I was with Daisy on the terrace at Presbrey showed me, when I reflected on it, that distance was but a phase of thought. So I learned that when I thought I was going to a place, I was going; when I thought I was there, I was there. All strong desire to be on any particular spot was realized instantaneously—but always with a lack of connection between the living and the dead that made the realization of no use to me. As I was afraid of my home at Rhinefields, I never went there after that one occasion. For a similar reason I never went to Presbrey. In

proportion as my longings centered round the club, in the club I found myself. And yet to be there on the terms on which I was admitted became with each repetition a more intolerable agony. I remember that I once surprised myself while saying:

"O God, don't send me there again!"

As nearly as I can recall, that was my first recognition of a God since the day I told Jim Rittenshaw that I should not say my prayers that night. But that recognition of a God, if it was a recognition, came after a second meeting on the stairs with Jim, which leads me to speak of my difficulties with Time.

I loved Time. It was part of that mortal clog which kept me halting and limping at the pace at which I preferred to go. I didn't ask for freedom, for agelessness, for measureless eternities. I begged for days and nights and months and years. The perpetual *Now* was too large for me.

I hated it without being able to escape from it. It was a feature of a consciousness that changed whether I would or no. The fact that

with us there is no night or sleep, that darkness is no darkness to us, that we know no fatigue and need no rest and cannot pass into the brief spaces of forgetfulness which to mortals bring relief from their mortality—all that made it difficult to tell when one day ended and another began, or to count the passage of the weeks. I made it a point in my rebellion against the whole condition to keep a kind of tally; but it eluded me.

Thus I could never hold to that sequence of events which brought Jim Rittenshaw before the bar of justice—and acquitted him. It was one of those acquittals in which sympathy and a rough, unreasoning sense of equity work together to cut the knot of law—to justify in fact what legal theory condemns.

I myself was relieved. I was further relieved to learn a little later that Jim was coming back to the club and that his friends—who had also been my friends—were to rally round him and give him the support of a quiet, affectionate welcome. Still greater was my relief when I

gathered that, with the curious tolerance men display toward the wrongdoing of one another, none of those who were holding out the hand to Jim was specially bitter toward me. That I was about to run away with Jim's wife might have been the kind of error into which any of themselves might fall. I had been a fool, and I had paid for it. They had all been fools about one thing or another, and at one time or another they had all paid for it. There was no one without sin to cast a stone at me. Now and then some one mentioned me as "poor old Nick," and my heart almost broke.

But the odd thing was that this tenderness—a negative tenderness, if you will—far from drawing me back among them, inspired my first real longing to get away.

That longing did not come to me consciously till after I had seen Jim on the stairs the second time.

I was dragging myself back to the old haunts. Since the incident with Harvey Breck, the sense of the uselessness of what I was doing had become a kind of anguish; but I

couldn't stop. Some of us whom I had been used to seeing there—Charlie Swett, for instance—came no more. I drew the inference that they had learned the lesson I had not learned, that I had refused to learn, and that, forsaking what good old Galloway called "mortal unrealities," they had gone in search of immortal realities. I began to wonder if my turn for that would come, while assuring myself that it would not.

For by this time I understood what it is to be a ghost, and why a ghost is different from every other man. Most men and most women, it appears, begin from the first stages of the mortal state to free themselves from mortal limitations. The process is conscious, subconscious, or unconscious, as the case may be, but it goes on. Little by little they detach themselves from the material, from the sensual, from the purely gross. Without knowing all they have accomplished, they find themselves at what is known as the hour of death able to take a long spiritual leap to where mortality no longer has an active hold upon them.

Not so with us! We who love mortality must live with what we love. We are earth-bound, flesh-bound. The thing which must die is the thing for which we crave. It is like an appetite for rottenness. Once it takes possession, it destroys the taste for the wholesome and the sane.

Fifth Writing:

I am trying to tell you about my second meeting on the stairs with Jim, but the hand that writes for me seems unable to get it down. I suppose there are things which transcend mortal expression, and this is perhaps one of them. Though this girl doesn't know what I am about to say, each time I approach the topic her hand trembles and the writing goes askew.

I shall make one last effort.

I have told you already that I was dragging myself back to where I had ceased to have a longing to be. That is, I had the longing still, but I recognized its vanity. After my experience with Harvey Breck, I knew, what I might

have known before, that nothing would come of my attempts but further disappointment. Still, I went back and back.

One by one the old crowd thinned away, following Charlie Swett's example. On the other hand, some of those who had disappeared from among the living—Ned Allenby, for instance, and Dawson Rhodes—reappeared in our company. They, too, began the silent round of suffering—cast out, cast off.

Jim was back. I knew it from what I overheard, but I never saw him till one day . . .

We were in the same relative positions on the stairs, on the very same steps, at the very same hour of the afternoon.

It was a strange Jim that I saw as he came down from the writing room, because it was a composite Jim—a Jim that receded through varying stages of manhood back to the boy with whom I used to play. I saw them all, each one behind another, as if in a procession—and yet as if blended into one.

There was the Jim of the moment—a bowed, gray-haired man, with deep lines in the face,

and stricken eyes, and a mouth about which there were hard, strong lines.

Behind him was the friendly Jim who had been on the early edge of middle age with whom I used to shoot and fish and talk about sugar-beets.

Behind him again was the Jim of the married days, detached, alert, with a twinkle in the eye that made excuses for our mutual lack of cordiality.

Behind him was the Jim of the bachelor years, coarse with the crudeness of adolescence, discreetly profligate, eager to wring from the senses every satisfaction.

And so back to the Jim of twelve or fourteen, the little apple-cheeked boy, high-spirited, high-tempered, full of fun both innocent and otherwise.

All these Jims were visible, as a voice within me said:

"This is your creation. You were his companion. You were his friend. You helped to mold him. Your hand put line to line and

shade to shade in his portrait. In him you formed the kind of man you loved—and he slew you. In you he, too, formed the kind of man *he* loved—and you did him an injury worse than death. You have pushed the material, the sensual, the mortal, up to the limit and beyond. Now you would push them beyond the beyond. Oh, stop! Go back! There's another way. It may not be an easy way, but it's easier than this. It would have been easy to you once, only you've made it hard. Hard as it is, you must take it, for why should you suffer any more?"

These thoughts passed in me as I looked into Jim's face. What passed in him I have no means of telling.

All I can say is that right across the gulf, his eyes looked into mine.

He uttered but one word:

"God!"

As Jim staggered back and clutched the banister, he must have lost sight of me.

I, too, lost sight of him.

Sixth Writing:

And now I am losing sight of all to which I have clung with so much tenacity. In the struggle to go back, I am beaten; but I am beaten at a stage at which I no longer wish to win. I have done with the earth, with the world, with the flesh. As thought renews itself, another hunger and another thirst begin to take possession of me. Desires, like places, are fading softly out.

So here in this garden I pause for one last word.

Around me are trees and flowers and green fields.

Beside me is the sweet, smiling girl whose hand I use to trace these lines.

Behind me the towers and cubes of the great city into which I poured my years of passion are growing tremulous.

Above me is a sky which seems to roll up like a scroll for which there is no further use, revealing things not lawful for any man to utter.

And before me . . .

III

Heaven

"'Matter,' as psychologically minded philosophers at last began to point out, is merely a substance we ourselves have invented to account for our sensations. We see, we touch, we hear, we smell, and by a brilliant synthetic effort of imagination we put together all these sensations and picture to ourselves 'matter' as being the source of them. Science itself is now purging 'matter' of its complicated metaphysical properties. . . . So that 'matter' becomes almost as 'ethereal' as 'spirit,' and indeed scarcely distinguishable from 'spirit.'"

—Havelock Ellis: *The Dance of Life.*

IT HAD now become apparent that the ship was going down. Ronalds himself had thought so from the minute of running up the companionway. The cant of the steps was ominous. It couldn't fling you forward nor tip you backward, according as the stairway turned, unless the big steamer was sinking by the bow.

Those less experienced had laughed at this; but Ronalds, who wore nothing but a dressing gown flung over his pajamas, hurried back to his cabin to change to his day clothing, buckle

on a life preserver, and put in his pockets anything of value. On returning to the glass-inclosed Deck A he found a little group of his intimates discussing possibilities with more misgiving than they had been willing to admit at first. Those who had no life preservers dashed to their cabins to get them. Women appeared among the men. Officers rushing about no longer cared to conceal their anxiety. When the order was given to prepare the lifeboats the danger was clear to everyone.

Nevertheless, there were reassuring conditions. The sea was calm; the night clear. The wireless was sending out all over the northern ocean the calls of a ship in distress. Even if she were to sink she couldn't sink so quickly that a steamer or two would not arrive in time. There would be discomfort, there might be peril and some suffering; but the days of great disasters at sea could be considered as of the past.

And yet when the last lifeboat, bearing the women and children, had been rowed away, a strange sense of helplessness in space came over

those who remained on board. With few exceptions, chiefly wives who refused to leave their husbands, these were men. They gathered in groups, or by twos and threes, heartening themselves and one another by predicting the speedy arrival of succor, or in fancying that lights were appearing over the horizon. That a ship so huge, so strong, so knowingly constructed, so richly fitted up, could go down in a placid sea, just because an iceberg had grazed her side, defied the probabilities. They had nothing to do but wait calmly till another liner, perhaps half a dozen liners, came racing to their aid.

She was listing badly to port. You could see, every quarter of an hour, that she listed more. Every quarter of an hour you had to move a little farther aft because of the sinking of the bow. Each time you moved aft it was a little harder, more of a tug uphill. With the list to port and the rising of the stern, merely to keep the footing became difficult. Most of them kept it, however; and if anyone staggered or slipped there was a forced or a feeble laugh.

The laugh sounding out of place, like laughter in a church or by a dying bed, it was hushed quickly.

Ronalds found it easiest to light a cigarette, to talk to those about him in low tones, to consider what to do if the worse came to the worst. Not that the worse *would* come to the worst, but *if* it did! There was no harm in thinking if you could think without panic, and of panic there was no sign. There had been none from the first. Among those who had now climbed to the boat deck, Americans, Englishmen, Canadians, there would be none at all. It showed the value of the years of unconscious discipline to which most men submit themselves that there could be this tranquillity.

It was the quiet that made the whole thing incredible. The ship lay as still as a dead behemoth, rocked with a gentle rocking by a sea which but gently heaved. The sky was a scattering of stars on deepest violet. There was no wind, only a pure icy air that cleansed the lungs. After the bustle and confusion of get-

ting the women and children away the silence was like that within a vacuum.

Ronalds moved farther aft, not for safety, but to be alone. Other men talked of sticking together, of keeping one another company. They would do this and that; they would aim thus and so. It would be every man for himself, of course; but for the minute, while they stood there conversing as if in a club and smoking cigarettes, each man sought a friend.

With Ronalds it was not so. Having but come to the spot to which he had long thought of coming, face to face with death, he preferred to stand there consciously. He would save himself if he could; but if he couldn't save himself he must collect his thoughts, he must be clear in his mind as to what he was looking forward to. He had tried all his life not to shirk this consideration nor be afraid of it. Accepting much in traditional teaching, he also accepted his common sense. He must have a few minutes in which to weave the two more closely as a whole. He must sum up the concepts to which he had given in his heart the name of God.

A few minutes earlier he had heard a clergyman among the passengers declare that this accident proved God's power of outwitting man. Man had been building bigger and bigger ships, ships that would stand the strain of storm and sea and collision, and still make port; and, lo! on a cloudless night, in a peaceful ocean, at the touch of a frozen finger, man's pride had been humbled. It was a reason, the clergyman said, for abasing oneself before an Almightiness which could so easily shatter human hopes.

Simple men, with little or no power of thinking for themselves, drew their cigarettes from their lips and bowed their heads in awe. They were reminded of catastrophic things in the Old Testament, where it was said that Jehovah smote unexpectedly, and smote hard. Their thoughts went back to the many ways in which they must have angered this God, or ignored Him, seeking hurriedly to propitiate Him now by some muttering of desperate prayer.

To Ronalds all this was futile; it was a little like blasphemy. He must acquit God of this

master crime, or he must renounce Him. Off by himself, bracing his feet against the starboard gunwale, as the ship canted more and more to port, he did his best to rally his intelligence against mumbo-jumbo superstitions and monstrosities. In this he was helped by the stillness, the immensity, the infinitude of the stars.

Hanging to the rail, some one crept toward him. When he came near enough Ronalds recognized him as a man he had taken to be a card sharper. All over the ship there were notices bidding passengers beware of this type of individual. Ronalds had crossed the ocean so often that he thought he could recognize one of them at sight. With this man his intercourse had been brief. Two or three times in the smoking room the fellow had asked him to take a hand at poker or bridge; two or three times Ronalds had declined. No other words had passed between them. Why the man should seek him out at this supreme moment Ronalds had no idea. On approaching him the card

sharper took the tone of indifference to danger the more terrified tried to assume.

"Well, what do you think of the chances?"

Ronalds gazed off to seaward. "Depends on how long we can keep afloat."

"Then what do you think of that?"

"I don't know. She seems to be settling pretty steadily."

"You don't think she'll heel over, do you?"

"I try not to. I'm not very ship wise. I'm in the same fix as yourself."

"I wonder."

Ronalds turned from his contemplation of the sea to the big figure at his side. A soft cap pulled down at a rakish angle hid most of the face, except for a heavy mustache of the black suggesting dye. An ulster over a life preserver was bulky and grotesque, of course, but not more so than the occasion warranted.

"What do you mean by that?" Ronalds questioned. "Why do you say 'I wonder'?"

The gambler tried to laugh. "Oh, there's fixes and fixes! You may go down with the

ship, just the same as me, but—but the big fix might be afterward."

"As to that, I suppose, we can only wait and see."

The man's motive revealed itself. "Ain't there nothin' we can do beforehand?"

Ronalds reflected. "Would you like me to say what I think, or do you just want to be bucked up?"

It was the other's turn to reflect. "I suppose I want to be bucked up."

"Well, then, I'm afraid I can't do it."

"Then do the other thing. Say what you think."

"I'm not sure that I care to do that. Why don't you go to the parson over there? He's supposed to know."

"Been to him. Says that if I put my trust in the blood of Jesus my sins will be washed away, and if we duck under I'll go to Heaven."

"And doesn't that buck you up?"

"It might if I could do it. But how in thunder am I goin' to put my trust in the blood of Jesus right off the bat like this? Do you

think I can repent of my sins just because the bloomin' ship's goin' down?"

"No, I don't believe you can; which seems to answer your question as to whether there's anything we can do beforehand. I don't think there is—as late as this. It doesn't seem to me that we can accomplish much by squeezing out prayers we shouldn't say if we could do anything else, or in pumping up trust in what we haven't trusted to already."

"But don't you trust to nothin'?" asked the card sharper.

Ronalds considered how best to express himself. "Yes, I trust to a great big general principle."

"That doesn't seem much to me."

"It's much to me. I can understand being saved on principle better than I can being saved by charms or incantations."

"I don't get you. What I want is somethin' some one'll tell me to do. I want the trick taken on this side, so as I'll be safe if I have to go over to the other."

"And there I can't help you. The only thing

I see is that what I'm worth on this side I shall be worth on that, perhaps with something plus."

"But when you ain't worth nothin'?"

"Oh, every man's worth something! You can't have lived to be forty—I take it that that's about your age—without having value of some sort."

"But what'd give me any value?"

"Wouldn't it be, in a general way, whatever little good you've ever tried to do?"

"But if you ain't ever tried to do any?"

"Oh, but you must have! I don't mean that you've ever started out to preach the Gospel, or visit the sick, or rake in the wicked from off the streets; but everything must count. Just to have been decent in the common everyday ways —to your father and mother—to your wife and kids, if you've got them—to anybody at all—to have been honest in your job—means something. It may not mean a whole lot; but it makes a beginning."

"What's the good of a beginning when here we may be at the end?"

"That's where I think you're wrong. We've only got to the continuation. And there's where my big principle comes in. This part of life has seemed pretty good to me, otherwise I shouldn't cling to it; so why can't I expect the next to be the same?"

The card sharper spoke only after a minute or two of pensiveness. "You've got somethin' to your credit. I'll be hanged if I can think of anything to mine. I never had a father or a mother that I can remember. I was brought up by an old skinflint of an uncle on a farm. He did nothin' but lambaste me if I wasn't up before dawn and out in all weathers. He wouldn't let me have no schoolin', or proper clothes, nor nothin'. I was always swearin' I'd run away. I'd 'a' done it if it hadn't been for a little crippled girl I'd got fond of and that lived on the next farm. She wa'n't more than nine or ten when I was a whale of a feller about eighteen. Well, that young one clung to me, and me—I was crazy about the little kid. I'd go miles to get her a plaything, and anything I knew how to do I'd learn her. Quick! My

Lord! she'd learn before you could teach her. And then one day she up and died. After that it wa'n't very long before I lighted out. On the way to New York I hauled in forty dollars from a farmer I'd got into a game of poker with. Always played a good hand of poker, and that seemed to start me. . . ." He stopped abruptly, seizing Ronalds by the arm. "Say, did you hear that funny noise? Like a big gulp it was. I bet she's dipped her nose so low that the water's struck the bridge."

As a matter of fact, it was what had happened. With a lurch she went down forward; the stern shot higher up. At the same time she shivered through her frame as if agony had struck her. Something had occurred which might mean the end. In spite of his poise, terror gripped Ronalds at the heart. Was the big test coming now?

Then a shout arose. "My God! Look! Look! Look!"

Over the bridge came the water. It came in a huge billow, caused by the sudden displacement, chasing along the deck. Some who had

been farthest forward were caught and swept away. Those who escaped rushed up the steep slant, crowding about Ronalds and his companion. The water came on like a twisting dragon, seeking to swallow them. They could only press farther and farther away from it, backing to the cross-rail, whence they looked down to the second-class deck below.

To the second-class deck below a mass of human beings was surging from every deck below that. In the dim light Ronalds could discern neither men nor women; he could only hear cries, moans, shrieks, and sobs that were meant to be prayers. The relative silence of those on his own deck was scarcely less heart-rending, since anguish had seized on them all.

They began jumping overboard, now from one deck, now from another. Screams and shouts rose from the water.

"Don't do that till there's nothing else to do," Ronalds advised the card sharper, who gripped him by the arm.

The man pleaded, in a weak voice like a

whine: "You'll not leave me. Promise me you'll not leave me."

"Not unless I'm swept away from you. Can you swim?"

"Not a stroke. But if you swim I can grab hold of you."

"If you do that, you must do it like this. You mustn't get your arms around me, or you'll pull me down and go with me yourself."

He was still explaining to him what to do and what not to do when, like a monster turning in its sleep, the ship careened over on her port side, leaving the starboard exposed almost to the keel.

The rest was simple. They sprang up on the iron flank because there was no help for it. Within a few seconds three or four hundred men were pushing one another down that shelving expanse, as it might have been down the slant of a beach for a plunge into the breakers. The walk was slippery but not difficult. There was no time to unlace boots. As each man ahead of them touched the water he struck into it.

Everything had to be done quickly, since terrible rumblings beneath their feet told them that the boilers were being torn from their seatings, while the crashing and smashing of all articles that could break, crockeryware and furniture, as they fell from their places, made a sound such as human ears have rarely listened to.

Even then the card sharper tried to brace himself with jocosity. "God! I wish there was an island near here! I believe I could swim to it—me that can't swim a stroke!—if it was a mile away."

"I'd be satisfied with a rock," Ronalds returned briefly; and then they were in the water.

They were hardly aware of the cold; they were no more than subconsciously aware of the horrors around them. Ronalds's efforts to keep afloat, with this dead weight hanging on to him, took all his mental power. He swam straight away from the ship, fearing suction if she went down, but otherwise he had no objective. The boats were by this time too far away, and overloaded as it was. If he had any thought in his

mind, it was of keeping on the surface till the sinking of the ship might bring them some bit of wreckage big enough to cling to. As yet he had seen no more than a chair or two, and these were seized by men more exhausted than himself. The card sharper did as he was told, moaning now and then, as if with an obsession: "O, God! if there was an island! O, God! if there was a rock!"

Ronalds swam and swam and swam.

With fatigue came some knowledge of what was happening about them. From time to time he found himself obliged to deflect his course to avoid bodies floating with face downward, or steer clear of swimmers growing spent. Through the starlight a dark object would sometimes seem to rise in front of them. "Boat ahoy! Boat ahoy!" the card sharper would hail, till the water he swallowed choked him. "Boat ahoy! Boat ahoy!" would be echoed from many another throat, despair in the very accents. Now and then would come a weary, "O, my God!" as some one who had struggled hitherto gave up the further attempt. Now

and then there was a gurgle, as some one went down finally.

Ronalds swam and swam and swam.

There was no way of estimating time. He might have been swimming for minutes; it might have been for hours. His mind had apparently stopped working. A moment came when he seemed to wake from sleep or to rouse from unconsciousness. There was certainly a gap in his mental processes, like that of which he had been aware after taking an anæsthetic. He was still swimming, however; he could still feel the hands of the card sharper on his shoulders.

But something had happened. It was as if he had got his second wind. If it was not his second wind, he had grown accustomed to the water. It was no longer icy. There were no more bodies floating about. He heard no more cries. Neither was it so dark, in that dawn seemed to be breaking. His sensations were delicious, if you had to find a word for them. He might be drowning. He had heard

that drowning was sometimes accompanied by a blissful drowsiness. This might be it. It might easily have been it except for the fact that he felt no drowsiness and that he swam on the surface with an even over-arm stroke.

Then, he didn't know how, his foot touched bottom.

"Man," he cried to the fellow clinging to his shoulders, "here's land!"

The gambler slipped to his own feet. "By God! I didn't know there was any land around here!"

Ronalds was now standing up, the sea lapping him. "There it is! It's a rock! We're close on it! It must be a rock that's never been discovered in the Atlantic. We've swum straight up to it."

But the card sharper hung back. "I don't like it. It's too black and steep. We'll be dashed to pieces if we try to land on it."

Ronalds tried to reason. "Why, no, old chap, it isn't black and steep! It comes down to the sea quite gently. There are no breakers—"

The other man howled. "No breakers! You must be a fool! They're curling up all over it."

"Those aren't breakers. They're ledges of white flowers. We must be in the Gulf Stream. You can feel for yourself that the water's growing warm."

"I'm freezing. No, I'm boiling. I'm boiling and freezing at the same time. You won't get me up there."

"But you can't stay here. It's the only land there is. Come along. I'll steer you."

They waded. Ronalds found it easy wading, whatever current there was helping him along. The card sharper lost his footing, tumbling on his face. When Ronalds helped him up he tumbled promptly again, spluttering and cursing.

"You wanted a rock," Ronalds tried to rally him. "Now that you've got it you don't like it. All the same, we're lucky to find it here. I suppose it will be crowded with survivors."

It was not crowded with survivors; it was not, so far as Ronalds could judge in the dimness of dawn, occupied at all. Strong and soft,

both steep and shelving, welcoming, protective, magical at once, it rose like a pinnacle in mid-Atlantic, in the lane of all the liners, and yet was charted on no map. He would have thought himself dreaming had he not been sure that he was wide awake. The gambler, too, was wide awake, shivering and gibbering at dangers which Ronalds didn't see.

Having come where the water was only knee-deep, he found it clear like the waters of the tropics, with a bottom of gold-colored sand. He was standing to look at the vegetation which ran to the rock's peak, green and feathery like that of Tahiti, when the gambler struggled backward with a shriek.

"Keep away! Keep away! Look at that big black python wriggling down the gully! It's making for us straight."

Ronalds was obliged to laugh. "That's not a python. It's a pretty little stream running through a grove of fern trees. You're jumpy. Let's get ashore. I'm sure we shall find some sort of fruit to eat."

Though the beach was of gold-colored sand,

firm as a floor and velvety as a carpet, the gambler hopped on it as if it was on fire. It was all Ronalds could do to keep him from running back into the water. There were minutes in which he might have let him go if the man himself had dared to do anything alone.

In the sheltered nooks of the rock Ronalds found what he expected, apples ripe on their trees, grapes ripe on their vines. But the card sharper wouldn't touch them. They were poisonous! He preferred to starve to death, since starvation was slower than poison as a process. Again and again he cried out that in eating Ronalds must be mad.

"I'm not mad; but I shouldn't wonder if I were in a trance. It's all too wonderful. I can't imagine where we are. Just look at the light. It's broad day now; but where's the sun? It hasn't risen. I don't see any sign that it's going to rise. Let's work round to the other side of the rock. We might find something there that would explain things. It's possible that this doesn't stand alone, but that it belongs to a chain of islands."

The terrified man refused. He saw nothing but perils. He wished he had never left the ship. To have gone down in her would have been better. When he had prayed for an island he hadn't imagined this kind of nightmare nest.

Ronalds dragged him along. He thought the fellow's mind had been unhinged by what he had seen in the night. A little rest would set him up again. In the meantime they must explore the resources of the spot on which they had found at least a temporary refuge.

There were no paths, but to Ronalds the ascent was easy. There was always a ledge to help him up, or a supple tree to cling to if he seemed in danger of slipping. The best he could do for his companion was to pull him after himself. Being a few feet in advance, Ronalds was the first to turn the corner of the rock, standing erect and lifting his arms, as he cried:

"There! Just as I thought! This is the first stage of our salvation."

The gambler crept up on his hands and knees, peeping round the shoulder of the rock, his eyes on a level with Ronalds's feet.

"What's all the fuss about? Where's the first stage of our salvation? I don't see anything but fog."

"Don't you see that town? Don't you see those towers, those people?"

The unhappy fellow groaned. Besides being on this pinnacle of fears, his sole companion was a madman. He followed him only for the reason that he could do nothing else. They made their way downward, almost to the water's edge, Ronalds in growing wonder. When they could go no farther they dropped to a seat on a ledge which the one declared to be a breeding place of squirming things, and the other saw bright with flowers.

Ronalds's eyes strained toward the town on the other side of the strait. It was a bright town, populous, active, beautifully placed, but not quite like any town he had ever seen before. There were houses, gardens, vehicles, ships in the harbor, boats on the bay—all the familiar things—and yet familiar with a difference. It

was the difference that attracted him more than the familiarity.

The other man saw nothing. As Ronalds gave him descriptions his only response was, "Fog—fog!—I can't see anything but fog."

In order to descry, to try to understand, Ronalds said no more. The gambler, too, fell silent, with the silence of misery. It was long before the former said in a tone of some relief:

"Do you know—I think they see us."

The other man only moaned. In this visionary chap he had no confidence. Ronalds went on again.

"They're certainly looking this way. See! It's those people on the shore, near what looks like a park." And then he cried out in astonishment: "Why—why—man! I see my father —who's been dead these twenty years! And he was an old man—while this is a man in the prime of life—only—only—it *is* my father!"

"All right! All right!" the other grumbled. "It's your father. Hope I shan't see mine. Wouldn't know him if I did."

There was another cry of astonishment. "But

—but—my father's coming over. He's—I *must* be crazy! He's walking on the water!"

And then the father was there—up on the rock—sitting beside his son on the ledge of fern and flower. Without greeting or any form of welcome, he met at once the amazement in Ronalds's mind.

"You see," he said, as if they had been talking a long time, "it's chiefly a matter of understanding. Our conditions Over Here are not very different from what they were Over There. It's only that being released from the prison of the five senses we get the free use of our minds. It's because I *know* that I'm able to walk on the water, not because I'm more gifted than when I didn't know."

Now that they were together, Ronalds had little recollection that there had ever been a separation. He found himself discussing the question as they had been in the habit of discussing questions when he was a boy.

"Because you know what?"

"Because I know now what physical science was trying to tell me in the earth-phase—that

matter is not the primal element—that the basic constituent of everything is force. Few people still in the earth-phase grasp that any more than I did. Most of them jeer at it—or never heard of it at all."

"I'm one of those who've never heard of it."

"Oh no, you're not! You simply didn't draw conclusions from the scientific discoveries talked of all around you. Even when I was in that stage men of science were making the veil of matter thin. Now they've practically blown it away, and yet earth-people pay no attention. When they do pay attention they'll learn that death is the greatest of their myths."

Ronalds, who didn't find it strange to be talking like this with his dead father, answered with force, "I don't see how you can call it a myth, when we've all got to die."

"We've all got to see it differently from the way in which we *have* seen it. Even Over Here we have our misconceptions from which we have to work away. The degree of our working away is the measure of our progress. When we have learned all that this stage has

to teach us, we move on to another, and to other stages after that."

Ronalds broke in hurriedly: "What do you mean by Over Here? Over—where?"

The father smiled. "I mean nothing local. The local frame of mind, in which objects are ruled by a sense of place, is one we have to overcome. Because you haven't overcome it yet I use the words you can understand. Strictly speaking, there's no Over Here and Over There; there are only states of mind. From one state of mind to another we have to go on by degrees. If you don't understand where you are it's because your mind isn't yet adjusted."

Ronalds showed his perplexity. "I think I know where I am. This is a rock in the Atlantic, isn't it? And that's a town on an island."

"They're that for you."

"But aren't they that for everyone?"

He answered indirectly: "One of the first things earth-people have to learn is the mind's power of having what it wants. If they knew

it—if they could only be persuaded of the fact —earth-life would be happier. For example, you wanted a rock; you've got a rock."

"But it's a real rock, isn't it?"

"It's like everything else that exists. It's real to each in the way in which he apprehends it. I see it as a medium in which I can meet you. To me it's a medium rather than a place. To this poor lad it's the haunt of fear, because fear is all he's fitted himself for. To you it's better than that, because on the whole your expectations have been right. Don't you see? In the earth-phase we thought ourselves the slaves of the material; in this we know that we're its masters. We don't have to pray that what we need will be given us, nor do we have to go without it. We take it. When we want it, it appears. That's the beginning of our release from the domination of the senses. Having everything we need is not the aim of our desires. It's only the starting point of our development."

Ronalds turned toward the gambler, who

was huddled on the ground in an attitude of wretchedness.

"This man hasn't everything he needs."

"He has everything he can understand. It's understanding that counts. It determines our happiness or our misery. It's our creative force. We always get in the new phase what we've prepared ourselves for in the former one. You're prepared yourself for *this;* he's prepared himself for *that.* It would be useless to give him what he isn't able to receive."

"And will he never be able—?"

"The principle of the universe is progress. From where he is he must go forward; but being so little adapted he can't go forward without suffering. More easily than he, you can begin here where you left off there—"

Ronalds asked the question which had been urging itself for some time past. "So I *have* left off there! I wasn't saved, after all."

"You mean that you couldn't keep to your old point of view as to your body. That's what it comes to. A minute arrived when you were in the water—I'm speaking in your terms of

course—at which you found that your old concept of a body wouldn't serve your purpose any longer. But the mind is quick. It can always shift instantly to a new point of view. Seeing that your old point of view wouldn't work, your mind took on a new one, more nearly approximate to Truth. Getting nearer to Truth you got nearer to Power, and getting nearer to Power you got nearer to the thing you wanted, which at that minute was a rock. You found your rock and climbed up on it. It was all, just then, that you could do."

Ronalds was still more puzzled. "But I've got a body much like the one I've always had."

"That is, your present state of mind is not so very different from your former one. But isn't that natural? You couldn't be expected to change a great deal in what we used to call a few hours. Earth-people always think that they must come Over Here through some terrific convulsion. But you've seen for yourself how easy it is. Over Here we're quicker to seize new facts. Earth-people reject new facts till they're forced upon them, and they can't help

themselves. Think of what the earth-man's body is composed of. I speak only from the point of view of earth-science. That it's made of flesh and blood and bone is only the surface mistake of the senses. Flesh and blood and bone can be analyzed back to what's been called the electron; and what is the electron? Isn't it only another name for Power? Power is the natural clothing of the mind even in the earth-phase. The error of earth-people is in translating power into impotence. Power being lavished upon them, their own minds turn it into flesh and blood and bone. Earth-science *knows* that even in the earth-stage the body is made of energy—that it's spiritual more than it is material. And yet in spite of that knowledge the earth-mind clings to its concepts of disease and helplessness."

Ronalds was curious. "I didn't know I'd come Over Here. At what exact minute did I come?"

"The minute when you came Over Here—in other words, the minute when you died—was that at which you dropped the old concept of a

body too feeble to be of use to you, and took on that of one which would meet your needs."

"And shan't I see my mother?—And my little sister who came Over Here as a baby?"

The father rose. "I'll take you to them now."

Once more Ronalds turned to the card sharper, crouched in silent woe.

"But I don't like to leave *him*. It would hardly be kind. He'll be all alone."

"Oh no, he won't be! He'll have better companionship than yours and mine. You must remember that in this phase no one is ever overlooked or forgotten. Someone's love—his father's—his mother's—I don't know whose—has been following him all his life. It isn't going to forsake him now."

But Ronalds was still reluctant. "He's clung to me right up to this. I don't like to desert him. He's so awfully afraid."

"You're quite right in that. We understand all those loyalties. They call us. We respond. And that we do respond to them—see!"

What Ronalds saw was the gambler slowly

rising to his feet. His hands were stretched out as if in timid, trembling welcome. Joy, terror, and amazement played across his face in turn.

"It's—it's my little lame girl—only she's not lame any more! She's running to me—running to me—running to me—through the *fog*!"

"He'll be all right now, even though he has a long hard way ahead of him. This is some one who's been specially on the watch for him. It's probably some one to whom he has been good. We all have them. They make our coming over, which, as a rule, is easy enough in any case, much more lovely. Now we'd better go and find your mother."

In the short descent to the water's edge Ronalds seemed to glide as if a little above the ground. And yet when his father went out on the water he recoiled.

"You can have a boat"—the father smiled back at him, holding out his hand—"but you might as well do it now. You can, you know. Let me repeat something you've heard often."

Ronalds knew the words, and yet as he heard

them recited in a voice like the murmur of deep waters, they came with unsuspected meanings:

"Towards daybreak He went to them, walking over the waves. When the disciples saw Him walking over the waves they were greatly alarmed. 'It is a spirit,' they exclaimed, and cried out in terror. But Jesus spoke to them at once: 'There is no danger. It is I. Do not be afraid.' 'Master,' answered Peter, 'if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee on the water!' Jesus said, 'Come!' Then Peter climbed down from the boat, and walked on the water. But when he felt the wind he grew frightened. Beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Master, save me!' Instantly Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, saying: 'O thou of little faith! Why did you doubt?' "

"You see"—the father continued to smile—"our Great One knew that even in the earth-phase His body was one of Power, at the command of Mind. So long as Peter knew it, too, *Peter walked on the water.* That's the point of the whole incident. It was only when he

grew afraid that he began to sink. Jesus said to Peter 'Come!' " He held out both his hands. "I say, *Come!*—to you."

So on the water in which he had drowned in the old phase Ronalds found himself walking in the new one.

IV

Abraham's Bosom

L'âme ne peut se mouvoir, s'éveiller, ouvrir les yeux, sans sentir Dieu. On sent Dieu avec l'âme comme on sent l'air avec le corps. Oserai-je le dire? On connait Dieu facilement pourvu qu'on ne se contraigne pas à le définir.

The soul cannot move, awake, nor open the eyes without perceiving God. We perceive God by the soul as we feel air by the body.

Shall I dare say it? We can know God easily so long as we do not force ourselves to define Him.

—Joseph Joubert, 1754–1824.

ECAUSE he was unaccustomed to doctors and thought it the right thing to say, he asked the physician to name his malady frankly.

"I wish you'd tell me. I can stand it, you know."

In the bottom of his heart he was sure there was nothing to be afraid of. He was only sixty, which in the twentieth century is young, and as hale as he had been at thirty. This weakness, this sudden pain, this sense of suffocation, from which he had been suffering for the

past few months, might be the beginning of a new phase in his life, the period commonly known as that of breaking up; but even so, he had good years still before him.

He could wait for the doctor's answer, then, without undue anxiety, turning toward him an ascetic, clean-cut profile stamped with a lifetime of high, kind, scholarly meditations.

The doctor tilted slightly backward in his chair, fitting his finger tips together, before he spoke. Any telltale expression there might have been in his face was concealed by a scraggy beard and mustache that grew right up to the edges of a lipless mouth.

"It's what is called Hutchinson's disease," he said at last. "I've known a few cases of it; but it's rather rare," he added, as if reluctantly, "and obscure."

"But I've heard of it. Wasn't it," the patient continued, after a second's thinking, "the trouble with poor Ned Angel?"

"You mean the organist chap at Saint Thomas's—the nearsighted fellow with a limp —the one you had to get rid of?"

A sharp hectic spot like a splash of red paint came out in each of the clergyman's waxlike cheeks.

"That's the man. It—it carried him off in less than two months."

The doctor was used to embarrassing situations.

"I believe it did," he responded in a tone that seemed to make the fact of slight importance. "I remember hearing that he put up no fight; that he didn't want to live. You knew him better than I did—"

"I knew him very well indeed, and a sweeter soul never breathed." There seemed to be something that the rector of Saint Thomas's was anxious to explain. "He'd played our organ and trained our choir for forty years—ever since the church was a little mission chapel, none too sure of its future. He was a chemist by profession, you may remember, and he'd done our work entirely without salary. But you know what American churches are. Once we'd become big and wealthy, we had to have the

best music money could provide; and so poor Angel had to go."

"And it killed him."

"No, I don't think so. People say it did, but I don't agree with them. It nearly killed me when I had to tell him—the parish put it up to me; but as for him, he simply seemed to feel that his life on earth was over. He had fought his good fight and finished his course. That was the impression he made on me. He wasn't like a man who has been killed; he was rather like one who has been translated. He just—was not. All the same, it's been a good deal on my mind; on my conscience, I might say. . . ."

But the doctor had other patients in the waiting room and was obliged to think of them.

"Quite so; and, therefore, you see that in his case there were contributing causes; whereas in yours—"

It was the patient's turn to interrupt:

"And for this Hutchinson's disease, is there any cure?"

In spite of his efforts to seem casual the doctor's voice fell.

"None that science knows of—as yet. But able men have taken it up as a specialty—"

"And its progress is generally rapid, isn't it?"

"Since you ask the question, I can only say, yes—generally. That doesn't mean, however, that in the case of a man of temperate life, like you—"

But Berkeley Noone had heard enough. He listened to what the doctor had to say in the way of advice; he promised to carry out all orders; but he was sure his death sentence had been pronounced. He took it as most men take death sentences—calmly as far as the eye could see, but with an inner sense of being stunned. Having got himself out of the office without betraying the fact that he knew he had heard his doom, he roamed the city aimlessly.

By degrees he was able to think, though thinking led no further than to the overwhelming knowledge that he was to be cut off. Cut off in his prime were the words he used. He had never been more vigorous than in the past few years—except for those occasional spasms

that latterly had come and gone and left him troubled and wondering. They had not, however, interfered with his work, seeing that he had preached and lectured and visited his parishioners and written books as usual. Moreover, he had fulfilled his duties with a power and an authority for which no younger man would have had the experience. For another ten years, he had been reckoning, he could go on at the same pace; and now the ten years were not coming!

Nevertheless, when, a few weeks later, he was confined to bed, he began to see that his situation was not without advantages of which he had taken no note at first. For one thing, he was tired. He had not recognized the fact till he had kept his room a week. A day having come when he was slightly better, it was suggested that he might get up and go out. But he didn't want to. He preferred to stay where he was. His lack of zest surprised him. It surprised him still more when he crept back into bed with the conviction that it was the spot he liked best of all. Bed by day had always fired

him with impatience. Now it seemed to him a haven, delicious and remote. The world might wag in the distance, but the wagging had nothing to do with him.

Nothing to do with him when all his working life had been spent at the heart of its energies! He had wrought and fought, and struggled and suffered and lost and won. He had been maligned and abused and misunderstood, and had found enemies where he might have looked for friends; and yet he had never been more himself than when in the excitement of battle. It was the less credible then that the world should have no interest for him any more, and that he should find it a relief to get away from it.

And he should get away from Saint Thomas's. Six months ago he would have been angry with the man who had suggested that as a possible form of solace; and yet the fact was there. The parish had been his life. He had come to it as its first rector; his preaching had built it up. He had scarcely ever taken a holiday without regulating beforehand every

service and meeting that would take place in his absence. He had scarcely ever come back without the sense of being just where he belonged. And now he should never again go into the pulpit and instruct other men as to what they ought to do! Never again should he make his round of calls on kindly, carping parishioners! He should not have to take the respectful admonitions of his vestry any more, or try to appease its members, or defend himself for writing books. All that was over. He sank back among his pillows with a sigh of comfort. He should get away from it.

Later he made a discovery that astonished him and gave him pain. He should get away from his wife.

A little thing revealed this, too, as an escape. Emily had bustled into his bedroom with a cup of broth. She liked plenty of salt in her broth, and he very little; but it was one of those small differences of taste to which she had never become reconciled. It fretted her that he shouldn't know when things were as they ought to be; and, not to fret her, he had during two-

and-thirty years submitted to her wishes docilely. But today he felt privileged to put up a mild protest.

"Isn't there too much salt in this broth, dear?"

Standing by his bedside, she took the cup and tasted it.

"No, darling. It's very good indeed. I seasoned it myself. It's exactly right."

"Thanks, dearest." As broth exactly right he forced himself to swallow it.

Having relieved him of the cup, she went on to make him comfortable. He had been comfortable as it was, but she didn't believe it. She had always declared that if he would only rest as she did he would get more repose. She proceeded, therefore, to show him how, as she had shown him how perhaps a million times in the course of their life together. Patiently he allowed himself to be pulled and shunted while the sheets were straightened and the pillows smoothed, and he composed his figure to the lines that suited hers. Patiently, too, he pretended to be more at ease than he had been

before, though he was saying to himself, with some eagerness, that death would take him away from this worrying wifely affection which never let him alone.

The anticipation gave him pangs of conscience, since they had lived together with quite the average degree of happiness, and he loved her with a deep and quiet love. Moreover, in spite of her double chin and her increase in waist line, he had never ceased to see in her the timid, wild-eyed nymph of a thing who had incarnated for him all that was poetry in the year when he was twenty-eight. Not till after their first child was born had her birdlike shyness yielded by degrees to an assumption of authority, which in the end became a sort of lordship over him. By the time they had had three children she had formed the habit of correcting the thousand and one small faults into which he fell without knowing it. The way he ate; the way he sat at table; the way he held a book; the way he coughed; the way he yawned; the way he shook hands; the way he pronounced certain of his words;

the way he gave out his notices in church; the way he allowed other men to walk over him —these, with a hundred similar details, had become the sphere of her loving, conjugal discipline. For more than twenty of their thirty-two years of married life her comments on his oddities had trickled on like a stream that flows and stops, and stops and flows, but never dries up entirely. He had borne it all because she could at any time, even now, throw him that look of the startled dryad which touched some hidden spring in him; but the moment had arrived when he couldn't help saying that he would be glad to get away from it.

And then, as his children roamed back one by one to see him die, it came to him that he should be glad to get away from them. That was a discovery which shocked him to the core. His children had been part of himself. They had been good children, too—on the whole. There were five of them, and their ages ran from thirty-one to twenty-two. From a worldly point of view they were all doing rea-

sonably well—and yet they were doing reasonably well in ways that never turned to him for sympathy.

Berkeley, junior, was a broker in New York, and lived on Staten Island with a wife and a baby son. He seldom came home now, except for a wedding or a funeral. The father had had hopes for something more brilliant for the lad in the year when he was born—hopes that had grown with the boy's growth and followed him to school and college, only to fade when the young man struck out for himself.

Then there was Constantia, who had been such a wonderful little girl. Beauty and cleverness had been her portion, with a command of the piano that had promised the career of a Carreño. But she had married an agnostic professor in a Western state university, where, owing to the necessity of doing her own housework, she had given up her music, while in submission to her husband's teaching she refused to let her children be baptized.

The twins, Herbert and Philip, were in modern phases of business, the one selling agri-

cultural implements in Texas, the other motor cars in Detroit. There was nothing a father could complain of in this. Berkeley Noone would not have so much as sighed if it hadn't been for his hopes. They had been such angelic little boys, and so quick at everything! He had placed them in the ideal walks of life —one perhaps as a historian or philosopher, and one—one at least—as a clergyman. But they had preferred the great career of making money, and, like their elder brother, rarely came home nowadays.

Beatrice was the enigmatic one. Though but twenty-two, she was restless and eager, and sometimes unhappy in ways as to which she never gave her mother or himself her confidence. Nominally living at home, she was oftener than not away on the pretext of studying art. All he knew of her with certainty was that she moved in the advanced brigade of the woman's agitation, that she had extraordinary friendships with young men, and that she smoked a great many cigarettes. Affectionate enough, but willful and mysterious, it pleased

her to keep her parents in ignorance as to her doings, once she had closed their door behind her.

If his offspring had disappointed him, it was not precisely disappointment that had worn him out; it was a sense of the futility of bringing children into the world at all. He had put his strength into theirs and they hadn't needed it. So long as they had let him, he had lived their lives with them, and shared their struggles, and suffered their pains; he had yearned and longed and looked forward for them more than they had ever yearned and longed and looked forward for themselves. He had seen them all as children of destiny! Whatever they might become, they could never be commonplace! Even when they had crosses to carry and cares to endure, their places in life could never be anything but high ones! And now—now they were all there, each absorbed in what seemed to him a merely starveling way of life, waiting for him to die in order that they might return to it as quickly as steam and electricity could carry them. Vitally and essen-

tially he was no more to them than the parent bird to the robin who has mated and made its nest in another tree.

So he gave up his yearnings over them. As they came and went in his room he watched them with the same detachment they betrayed toward him. He would have said he had outlived them had he ventured to use a word in which life was a compound. Certainly there was a sense in which he had outgrown them. He had left them behind in some race that had more than death for its goal. The effort to keep going back to them, going back and pulling them along, was too wearisome to keep up. In the place for which he was bound he would get rest from the cravings on their behalf that had haunted him ever since the minute when he knew the first of them was to be born.

And yet his thoughts were not all of rest. Far from it! He was of Puritan stock and traditions. Though in later life he had abandoned that belief in an angry God in which his childhood had been nursed, something of the

early teaching clung to him. Won as he had been by the modern doctrine of eternal hope, he still lapsed into moments when death became to him, in Biblical phrase, "a certain fearful looking for of judgment."

He had been a great sinner. Though no one knew it but himself, a great sinner he had been. He had preached to others, and warned them, and consoled them, and prepared them for death, and had passed as a man of God; and no one suspected the depths of evil that lay beneath the dignified surface of his life. There had been wicked thoughts, hasty words, carnal desires, envies, antipathies, doubtings, angers, rashnesses, and everything else that makes a man's inner life something which he hides from others and that often appals himself.

This was true even of his later life. And when he went back to his earlier manhood, to his youth, to his boyhood, to his childhood . . .

There were nights when the cold sweat broke out all over him as he thought of these things. In a few days now—in a fortnight or three weeks at furthest—he would have to give an

account of all that was recorded against him. When the Throne was set and the Books were opened he might be blasted forever under the Judge's keen, all-seeing glance. That glance itself would be the worm that dieth not and the fire that never should be quenched.

But he had other moments of exalted and somewhat desperate trust in a redeeming love that had paid the penalty for these offenses and won their forgiveness. He was not very clear as to how this vicarious atonement could ever have been made; but since the thought of it was all there was to cling to, he did his best to cling to it. He repeated hymns and prayers and passages of Scripture as he had repeated them at the bedside of men and women who had been facing the crisis he was facing in his turn. He told himself he was comforted; he almost persuaded himself that he was; and yet at the back of his mind there lay the suspicion of a mere self-administered spiritual drug.

So day by day he receded from the world, from his work, from his wife, from his family,

and from all that had formed his interests, seemingly making that peaceful end for which those who cared for him watched and prayed. But inwardly he was like a man sweating blood. Death was abhorrent to him. There were minutes when he could have doubted the goodness of a God who had foreordained it. What was the good of birth and effort and love if they could end only in this? There was the great question with which he wrestled as he had never wrestled with anything before.

He reminded himself of One who said, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." But for sinners like himself there was nothing in the promise, nor in any promise similar; and there never had been. He should have to taste of death. He should have to eat its last morsel and drink its last dregs. Hutchinson's disease had got him by as many tentacles as the octopus gets its victim. It was swathing him round, and dragging him down, and darkening his intelligence. He was going the way of all flesh. His wife would come after him, and their children after them, and

their children after them; and so on till the globe collapsed. What was the good of it? What was the good of it? Why could not the All-intelligent, if there was such a Being, have given man a life that wouldn't have to come to this miserable wreckage?

These were his thoughts as he waited for his last agony. That it was expected soon he judged by the way in which the doctor shook his head, and his wife relaxed her bustling to watch him with tearful eyes. Two or three times a day the boys tiptoed into the room, gazed at him with solemn, sympathetic faces, and tiptoed out again. Beatrice cried in corners, and Constantia helped the nurse when her mother was obliged to rest.

Practically they had taken their farewell of him; but there came a day when they did it in actual fact. It was a bright summer afternoon, with the sunshine streaming in at all the windows. The nurse had given the sign by summoning Emily; Emily had called Constantia; and Constantia, Beatrice and the boys. They all kissed him and stood or sat about the bed,

his wife holding one hand and Phil the other. He hardly knew by what signs they judged, since he felt but little weaker than on other days and not much more in pain. They seemed to know, however, that the time had come, and to treat him a little like the jailers and sheriffs who notify the condemned that the supreme minute is approaching.

He could only let them do as they thought right, fixing his eyes somewhat vacantly on a picture which had long hung at the foot of his bed, and which was a favorite. It was a steel engraving of Holman Hunt's "Light of the World," purchased on his honeymoon, after Emily and he had seen the original at Oxford. Neither of them had been expert critics of painting, but they had stood together and spoken of the light thrown out by the lantern in the Saviour's hand as one of the most beautiful things they knew. For the figure and face they had not cared. They had cared for nothing but that light. For him, if not for her, it had remained a lasting memory. He had been able to see it in the steel engraving's black-and-

white splotch during all the intervening years, and to identify its glow with England and Oxford, and young love and his soul's striving.

And he saw it now. It was odd—but he did. It positively burned in the lantern. He was glad of the illusion because it helped him, he thought, to get nearer the last minute without knowing it. It would come, of course—that last minute. There would be an instant, perhaps in half an hour, when his soul would tear its way out of his body and he should be thrust, a naked, quivering bundle of spiritual nerves, before angels and archangels and principalities and powers, and a God whose first question would be that which was put to Cain: "What hast thou done?" If, then, he was not to hear the sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," it would be only because there had been a cross on Calvary. Mentally he clung to that cross as he watched the light grow brighter and brighter in the lantern in the print.

He was dimly conscious of a man he knew, a brother clergyman who had administered the

last sacrament to him on the previous day, coming into the room and kneeling at his bedside. Dimly he was conscious that the family knelt down and that there were prayers. They were prayers that came to him as if from such a long way off as hardly to reach his ear. When the murmur of "Our Father" traveled up it was like a rumble from a world below him. He tried to join in it, but he couldn't keep his mind on the phrases. He couldn't keep his mind on the phrases because of the shining of the light. It was becoming an amazing light, bursting the limits of the lantern, making glory of the figure, making beauty of the face, turning the crown of thorns into jewels, and throwing a sunshine brighter than the sunshine on the wall.

It was a pleasant illusion, he told himself—the action of the self-administered spiritual drug he distrusted and yet relied on. At any rate, it made things easier. It gave him a sense of relief that might even be called physical. He noticed, all at once, that his pain was gone. That, of course, was illusion, too—probably no

more than the end of his power to feel; but the iron claws that Hutchinson's disease had dug into his flesh had loosened their grip. He was breathing easily for the first time in months. Had he not known that he couldn't really be better, he would have been tempted to say he was well. He would have been able to get up; only that it was so delicious to lie there seemingly free—he reminded himself that it could be no more than seemingly free—from torture, and with his mental burdens gone. What had dispelled them he didn't know; but it was a fact that they had rolled away.

"This is rest!" he murmured to himself.

A voice answered him promptly: "Yes, it's rest, because you're now beginning to realize as a fact what you've always taken as no more than a lovely spiritual image—that underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

He was not surprised at the voice. Familiar with the fancies of the dying, he knew to what to ascribe it. Reminding himself that he must

hold on to his senses till he was deprived of them, he made no effort to reply.

Instead, he watched the spreading of the light that flooded the room and glorified its occupants. Wife and son and daughter were all beside him; but in that light they were different. They were also doing things he didn't clearly understand. All he knew was that he felt toward them an extraordinary tenderness, and that something similar came from them to him.

"I suppose this must be dying," he said to himself, as he noticed that the new day had blotted out the sunlight.

"No," came the voice again; "because there's no such thing as death."

To Berkeley Noone this was the real point at issue. It was worth taking up, even if only in delirium.

"Of course there's no such thing as death from the spiritual point of view—"

"And there is no other."

"I know there'll be no other in the next life, but—"

"But there's no next life. There's only one life."

"In a sense—yes," he admitted, not without a shadow of impatience. "And yet I'm—I'm dying."

"No, you're only waking—waking from the deep sleep that fell on Adam and on all Adam's so-called children."

He fixed his attention on but one of these points:

"Why do you say so-called?"

"Because they're only the offspring of a dream."

"I don't see how they can be the offspring of a dream when a dream is nothing—"

"Pardon me; a dream is something—while it lasts. It's seen to be nothing only when we wake and know it for what it was."

"And do you mean to tell me that all my past life has had no reality?"

"Not all your past life; only whatever in it may have been evil, unhappy, or mortal. Once we've thrown off that, we come to our genuine

birthright. You're probably able to prove it by some heightening of your faculties already."

"Do you mean the light I see from the picture at the foot of my bed?"

There was genuine curiosity in the tone:

"Won't you tell me what it's like?"

He complied with this request. The voice continued:

"That's very like my own experience—only that in my case the increase of perception was in the way of what our mortal senses call sound. You were with me at the time, and may remember."

"I?"

"According to the reckoning of time it was in June over a year ago. The day was close and the windows were open. The noises of the street came up to my room rather distressingly. I tried not to listen to them or be annoyed by them; but it was beyond me. Then by degrees all such noises merged into something else—into music—into floods of music —into floods on floods of music; and I was made to understand that in the Reality there

is no such thing as ugly sound; that it's only the senses of the Man of Dust that degrade to harshness and discord that which in itself is harmonious and lovely."

With some surprise Berkeley Noone became aware that behind the voice there was a personality. Timidly he asked the question:

"Aren't you Angel?"

The answer came back with what he would hitherto have called a smile. It struck him now as an effulgence:

"The name will do for the present. You and I are still within the sphere of mortal thought—you, of course, more than I; but we shall work away from it."

Among the questions Berkeley Noone was eager to ask, one presented itself as most pressing to his curiosity. It stood for years of speculation, wonder, and hope.

"Then," he began, still timidly, "you're really able to come back and be with us—here in my room?"

There was a repetition of what seemed to him an effulgence.

"You must remember that what you call your room is only a phase of mortal consciousness. It's one of the expedients by which the Man of Dust makes use of his limitations. Being finite himself, he can think only in terms of spaces and walls and tables and chairs, which he sees to stand for other ideas as soon as he begins to see at all. What you've said of the new light makes a very good illustration."

"But that's only the illusion of a dying man."

"It's more than that. It's the point by which your waking thought catches on to actuality. What you've seen in your picture hitherto has not been what was there; it was what the Man of Dust put there as the best he could do. It's been a sheet of white paper with some printing in black; but it was as much as the eye of Dust could see. Your mind, on the other hand, got hold of the immortal conception when your mortal vision was blind to it."

"And by the immortal conception you mean—"

"We'll see that if we go back to your picture. Jesus spoke of Himself as the Light of the World; but He never meant that He was such a light as mortal discovery draws from electricity. He was a light in consciousness. As a light in consciousness He has appeared to every generation since He uttered the words. As a light in consciousness the artist saw Him, even though he himself couldn't get beyond canvas and paint. But it was the light in consciousness that appealed to the engraver who copied the work, and through him to you. The engraver was trying to give you some of that light, and some of it you got. Now you're getting more of it. You haven't it all, by any means; but you can see for yourself that you've made a long step forward from paper and ink. You'll find that ever to be making new and beautiful discoveries, and yet never to exhaust them, is one of the joys of the new condition."

Berkeley Noone returned to the point he had raised before.

"What interests me most is that the departed can really come back—"

A ripple in the effulgence might have corresponded to laughter.

"But there are no departed. Absence and presence are states of consciousness. When you've learned more of infinity you'll see that it's so. I've been with you ever since what you called my death, and you've been with me."

There was here new matter for surprise.

"I've been with you? I confess I don't understand—"

"You've been with me in the sense in which a sleeping man is with the waking one who sits beside him and watches. You've been dreaming of me—"

"I've been thinking of you—a good deal—if that's what you mean."

"The expression will pass. And, as we've been so much in each other's thoughts, I happen to be the one with whom you can most easily come into touch, now that—"

"But I don't see you."

"You don't see me partly because, if I may go on using mortal terms, you've never seen anything in your life." Before a protest could be expressed, the voice continued: "Though the Man of Dust knows he never sees anything farther off than a reflection on the retina of the eye of Dust—a reflection turned upside down, and which he has always to be correcting mentally—he rarely stops to consider that. He talks of seeing; he persuades himself that he sees. Knowing, strictly speaking, you were blind, you, nevertheless, taught yourself to think that a mere reflection was Edward Angel, when, as a matter of fact, I was something else."

"If you were something else—what were you?"

"You'll know that as you go on. At present let me say that I was not the shortsighted fellow, with a limp, who played the organ at Saint Thomas's. He was the illusion of the Man of Dust. He saw me, he made me see myself, with infirmities that never existed, except in the mind of Dust."

"But even the mind of Dust, as you call it, can take cognizance of—"

"It can take cognizance of nothing but in corrupting facts and disfiguring them. The Man of Dust has no faculty for understanding things as they are, otherwise than remotely."

It suited Berkeley Noone to argue, since the process dulled his anticipation of the last event. It annoyed him somewhat that the bases of existence, as he had always conceived of it, should be so radically called into question. He seized, therefore, on what seemed to him an admission.

"But remotely, your Man of Dust can understand?"

"Doesn't your present experience answer that? You have seen the Light of the World as clearly as it could be transmitted to you through canvas and paint or through paper and ink. Now you're looking at it more nearly as it is."

"But you allow that I've seen it already to some degree?"

"If you hadn't seen it already to some degree

you wouldn't be getting this fuller conception of it now. Light is one of the most radiant symbols we have for God; and all through the ages of time men have loved darkness. Those who love darkness must go on in darkness till they win out to a glimmer of perception. Those who love light inherit it. There are no leaps and bounds in life. What mortals call death takes them where it finds them—as every day and hour does the same. If through the mortal years you hadn't been working away from mortality—"

"I should still be seeing in the Light of the World no more than the engraver could show me. I shouldn't have reached what you call the immortal conception. I think I follow you." He harked back to the consideration he thought not to have been fully met. "And yet I don't understand why, if I can see the Light of the World, I can't, for example, see you."

"Aren't you still keeping too close to Dust conceptions? Aren't you forgetting that in the Dust condition you were blind? You never

got beyond your own eyeball. You never really saw a person or an object of any kind. Before you could think so, you had to learn a whole series of Dust conventions. You had to be taught shapes and colors and distances and comparative sizes, and come to an agreement with other Men of Dust that a bed was a bed and a chair was a chair, when in reality you didn't know what they were."

"I knew that a chair was a chair by sitting in it, and that a bed was a bed by lying down."

"Did you? What are you lying in now?"

"Am I not lying in my—?"

But the sentence died on his lips. When he sought for his bed, with its pillows and its sheets, he found something else.

"Well?"

The word was accompanied by a renewal of the quiver of amusement in the radiance.

Berkeley Noone answered very slowly:

"My bed—seems to be—a wonderful—comforting—sustaining—knowledge that—that I am—supported."

"And isn't that what I told you at first—

that it's positively a fact that underneath are the Everlasting Arms? The Man of Dust takes these eternal truths and makes them temporary, material, destructible. For inexhaustible sustenance, protection, and supply he uses as his symbols trivial things, like tables and beds and walls and floors, and food to eat and money to spend. In the very act of yearning for the actual he contents himself with a falsification, just as a child who grasps at the moon can be satisfied with a tinseled toy. Sight, which is an attribute of Infinite Intelligence, he locates in a blind material physique; and, even while admitting his mistake, he goes on making it."

Berkeley Noone endeavored to show the mortal impulse as less culpable than it was represented.

"And yet we Men of Dust, as you call us, admit that we see with the intelligence. We don't speak merely of seeing with the eye. One of our commonest expressions is 'I see!'—as applied to comprehension."

"Which goes to prove what I've been telling

you. The Man of Dust is rarely without some gleam of true understanding. It has to be remembered that the mist which, as mortals saw for themselves in the Book of Genesis, went up from the earth is less dense in some places than it is in others; that the deep sleep which fell on Adam is a restless sleep. At times the Man of Dust is haunted by nightmare; he exists in a delirium of terror and pain. At times he is so nearly awake as to catch a glimpse of the blissful and peaceful reality. In his music, for instance, and all his arts; in goodness and all high thoughts; in love and compassion, and learning and knowledge, and every honest pursuit, he sees some ray of that reality which you're beginning to perceive as you never did before; and he strains toward it."

"So that when a man says, 'I see!'—in the sense that he understands—he puts himself on a higher plane than when he merely tells himself he sees with the physical senses."

"You must be getting that conviction for yourself. It must be growing plainer to you that mortal intelligence is less deceptive than

the mortal senses. The mortal eye, like everything else that is made of Dust, is poorly adapted to its purposes. Assuming that it ever sees more than an inverted reflection, its range is still limited; and within that range it is subject to a thousand errors and infirmities. The mortal intelligence, being nearer akin to actual Intelligence, is less liable to error, even though it errs. Man sees only when he sees altogether through the mind; and it is in mind only that I shall see you and you will see me."

Berkeley Noone withdrew from communication with his invisible companion in order to assimilate some of these ideas. In his effort to cling to his faculties, as he called it, he put it plainly to himself that he was in a state betwixt reality and dreamland. The very clarity of his mind was like that produced by some mighty stimulant. It was one of the phases of dying he had heard about; but it was at least a pleasant phase, putting the evil moment a little further off. Meantime he watched his wife and children with renewed perplexity.

It puzzled him that, while he was lying at the very point of death, they should apparently be going and coming on errands not directly connected with himself.

A few minutes ago his wife was holding his right hand and Phil his left.

Each of the others was watching him, as he was watching them, with eyes of piteous farewell. He might have supposed that, for the rest of the time he stayed with them, they would have no other preoccupation.

But now they seemed bent on obeying some lord who was not death. Moreover, in the Light of the World, they continued to undergo a transfiguration he could neither describe nor define. They were themselves, but themselves glorified. Emily was again the dryad of their youthful days; but a dryad with ways of light and tenderness he had never known her to possess. Each of the children was bathed in the same beautifying radiance. He knew them—and yet he didn't know them. All he could affirm of them exactly was that his doubts and worryings and disappointments on account of

them were past. He felt what Angel had just been telling him, that he was waking from some troubled dream on their behalf. The boys were not sordid; Beatrice was not willful; Constantia was not a renegade to her God. That he should ever have thought so began to seem to him incomprehensible.

Angel spoke, as if there had been no interruption:

"It's because mortals never see one another, except as wearing grotesque masks, behind which the true and normal features are hidden. The Dream Man may catch the shadow of God's Man; but he never beholds him as he is. He invents another Dream Man. The Dream Man is to God's Man no more than the reflection in the hollow of a silver spoon to the face it is supposed to give back."

Once more Berkeley Noone was quick to seize a point that made for mortal reality:

"But there is a face there."

"Oh yes, there is a face there. The Man of Dust never creates anything. He only takes what God has created and distorts it. His

senses have about the same degree of accuracy as wind-swept water, which shows the objects standing above it not only upside down, but quivering, broken—a succession of shadows that appear and disappear and reappear, and have no stability."

"But your Man of Dust has intelligence; he has power. Look at his development through the ages; look at his discoveries, his inventions, his mastery of the elements."

"You mean that he has his approaches to actuality. True! There are spots where he so penetrates the mist that it grows very thin. His great advances are in the direction of truth. His use of steam, of electricity, of the Hertzian waves, brings him nearer to things as they are, and so nearer to God. It's one of his limitations that he can think of coming nearer to God only ethically. He sees God in His relation to moral right and wrong, and he hardly ever sees Him in any other way. He practically never takes the telephone, for instance, or the motor car, as his demonstration of God's power. He looks upon them as his own

discoveries or inventions, having nothing to do with God, and so directs his advantages not to good ends, but to evil."

While Berkeley Noone was considering a response to this, Angel's voice, after a brief pause, went on:

"How are the Children of Dust making use of the knowledge they've gained during the last fifty years of their counting? Is it to help one another? Is it to benefit themselves? Is it to make the world happier, or more peaceful, or more prosperous? Haven't they taken all their new resources, all their increased facilities, all their approximations to Truth, all their approaches to God—the things which belonged to their peace, as Jesus of Nazareth called them —and made them instruments of mutual destruction? Aren't they straining their ingenuity to devise undreamed-of methods for doing one another harm? You think me harsh toward them; but can you consider for a moment their colossal stupidity and not be harsh? Isn't it fair to say of the carnal mind that its promptest use of a blessing is to turn it into

a curse? Is there any good thing that it has not, at one time or another, so perverted that it becomes difficult to see what useful end it was meant to serve? Isn't it a fact that the most beautiful things in existence—the love of husband and wife, for instance, the affection of parent and child—are so wrested by the carnal mind from the purposes for which they were ordained that they become the causes of misery?"

Berkeley Noone having reluctantly admitted this, the quiet voice pursued its line of reasoning:

"The best that can be said of the carnal point of view is that it doesn't last. The Man of Dust is fully aware that he has only a brief day. From the beginning he foresees his end. Dust he is, and to Dust he must return. He can pervert the facts for no more than threescore years and ten, or fourscore years, or a hundred years at most. Knowing that, he keeps his worst error in reserve."

"And his worst error is—?"

"The invention of death."

"Ah, but is death an invention? Isn't it the most real of all realities? Here am I, a dying man—"

"Everything is real to which we lend reality. It has just the reality we lend to it. The Man of Dust persuades himself that his return to his natural nothingness is the most fearful form of destruction. He frightens his children into the belief that, with the passing of delusion, something vital in them ends. He calls into existence a hundred bogies—a future life, another world, a hades, a purgatory, a hell. Even of a heaven he turns the lofty spiritual imagery of John, in the Relevation, into a tedious, useless materiality. He stops at nothing that will add terror to man's blessed waking from his night of phantasms. You yourself were probably not free from some alarms any more than I."

The thought that had been forming in Berkeley Noone's mind now burst from him with extreme intensity of awe:

"But am I—am I—dead?"

Again there was that dancing of the radiance which might have represented laughter.

"How can you be dead when there is no death? Do you think yourself dead?"

He sought another way of putting it:

"Then—then—has the great change taken place?"

"There's been no great change to take place —for you. All your life you've been doing your best to throw off mortality; and now you're succeeding. That's all! As for a great change—well, that's for those who still remain in the mortal state. They are saying you're dead; but you best know whether you are or not."

In the enlarged consciousness, amazement struggled with relief. It was the latter that triumphed as he asked, incredulously:

"But is it—is it—over?"

"Haven't you been looking for a shock, when life, as we know it, has nothing but sweet and gentle transitions?"

Berkeley Noone was still unable to convince himself.

"But how can I be"—unable to find any other, he used the word again—"how can I be dead when I'm still in my room, with my family?"

"You mean that you haven't fully abandoned your mortal point of view. That will come by degrees. Even as it is, you see some things differently, don't you?"

This could not be denied. As Berkeley Noone looked about him—if looking was the word—he began to note a transmutation of all the things with which he had been familiar. It was true of them, as of the members of his family, that they were the same, yet not the same. If he could have found words to describe his new perceptions he would have said that he was getting to the inner essence of objects of which he had hitherto known but the surfaces. Mortal symbols had, on the whole, been well enough, as far as they had gone; they had only been inadequate. They had been inadequate and, as he found himself able to observe, unsatisfying. They had been unsat-

isfying because they brought tremendous truths down to the temporary or the trivial.

He found himself moving about the well-known chamber. Everything was around him that he had known of old: objects he had once possessed but had lost or otherwise parted with seemed also to be his again; and yet each thing was there with a significance he had never supposed to be inherent in workaday bits of furniture. He had already seen his bed melt into a knowledge of support; his armchair was now an assurance of rest, with its complement of strength.

Where there had been his bedroom desk, with papers and pens, and the paraphernalia of a busy life, there was the promise of activity. The floor became a sense of the solidity of his new condition; and the wall a guaranty of privacy, of independence, of a place for him as an individual in an infinite world of work.

Whatever had been matter he saw as thought; but thought which, nevertheless, projected a new type of objectivity. The rugs were thoughts; each tiny trifle, useful or use-

less, as the case might be, represented some eternal, indestructible idea. A few rows of books, some of which he had not taken from their shelves for years, were a thronging variety of thoughts, glowing, glorious, crowding each other, and yet making room for each other, like jewels in a treasury or flowers in a field.

It was his bedroom. He had no doubt of that. It was the intimate environment his needs and tastes had created, and which expressed him. But it was to be his forever. It was not a spot he had been allowed to love and permitted to rest in, and from which he was to be torn away. There had been no such futility to life; no such lack of purpose in its development. What he had gathered he was to keep; what he had cared for he was to continue to enjoy. The dear familiar things that the Man of Dust had told him could be his but for a little while were to abide with him—not only as the medium through which his spirit had worked outward, but as an earnest of security.

He could hardly tell by what means he apprehended this, or whether the physical senses

were still at his command or not. He could not have said whether sight and hearing had become amplified, or whether they had yielded to some higher method of perception. He was like a newborn child, so abundantly endowed with gifts that as yet he is incapable of appraising any one of them. He could only perceive—and enjoy. He could only enjoy—and delight in the knowledge that he was beyond the range of vicissitude.

Love and its blessings were not to be snatched away from him. The past, with its ties and its kindly, simple associations, had not been lived through in vain. He was not to be wrenched from them abruptly, nor sent to strange spiritual countries, where even the highest pleasures would be alien. He was merely living on; living on with heightened powers, doubtless, and with a more exact valuation of men and things—but living on.

It ceased to be a question in his mind as to whether he was still within his room or not, because space, as he had known it, no longer had significance. Words like "where" and

"when" began to give up their meaning. That which was vital to the past being his forever, conditions of time and place did not arise. All the taxed and tired recesses of his being, so worn with the struggle against chance and change and mortal fear, could rest.

"After all," Angel answered to these reflections, "rest is humanity's primary craving. It asserts itself above all demands for joy or power. Just as the infant's capacity for sleep is beyond any other of its functions, so to those emerging from mortality the mere knowledge of safety is a reason for taking that perfect, delicious repose which the Man of Dust never permits to himself or to his children. It isn't sleep, for the reason that the true mind never has to relax. But not to have to be afraid any more! . . . Never again to have to worry or be anxious, or to fret oneself! . . . He who comes where at last he sees this finds nothing so blissful as just to rest and rejoice."

So Berkeley Noone rejoiced and rested. It was occupation enough, it was happiness enough, to be getting the true meaning of his

past. The knowledge that life was not the fleeting thing it had always been described to him, that it had everlasting values, was in itself a satisfaction of which his spirit took long draughts. All that was good and useful and honest and well-intentioned remained as a perpetual inheritance. He returned to the fact again and again. There was only one life, as Angel had told him; there was only one world. No sudden transplanting made a shadow of the one, and no violent breaking off a monstrosity of the other. He lived and saw; he lived and knew; he saw and knew and lived. He lived with the old things he had always lived with, discovering only their full uses; he lived with the old ties, learning only their stability and permanence; he lived with the old duties, perceiving only that as he would fulfill them thenceforth in higher ways they would lead to higher issues.

And as he thought of higher issues another question arose in his mind. It was a startling question:

"If I'm dead, why don't I—see God?"

Angel's voice replied, as though the words had been actually spoken:

"Aren't you seeing Him?"

"Why, no!"

"Why not? What did you expect to see?"

Before this simple inquiry Berkeley Noone was dumb. When he tried to formulate his hope it was brokenly.

"I've always understood that—that I should be taken before the Great White Throne, and that, high and lifted up—"

"You'd see a supernal Man, or three supernal Men, taking great delight in an adoring chorus from a white-robed throng?" A pause preceded the next words, like a pause of reflection. " 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life,' " the unseen companion quoted. "There have been few for whom John didn't write the book of his Revelation quite in vain. It has been the conviction of the Man of Dust that if he didn't see a reflection turned upside down on the retina of Dust he didn't see at all. He has persuaded himself that he lives in a world where God is invisible, when, as a matter of

fact, even he, with his Dust limitations, is always seeing Him."

"Oh, but I haven't been always seeing Him," Berkeley Noone began to plead. "If I had—"

"You've been seeing Him and you didn't know it. Go back to what we said as to sight being not the action of a temporary optic nerve, but essentially the power to understand. We see God by what we understand of Him; we understand Him by His attributes; and we measure His attributes by their beauty and goodness and practicality. Wherever there has been a blessing for you to enjoy, you've seen God. Whenever love has cheered you or kindness helped you, you've seen God. In sunrise and sunset and moonlight and starlight, and trees and fields and harvest and flowers and ice and snow and air, and health and beauty, and generosity and friendship, and all that gives pleasure to existence, you've seen God. He hasn't been invisible. There is not one world in which God is seen and another world in which He is not. There is not a life with God and another life away from Him. There

is only one world, and God fills it; there is only one life, to which God is All-in-All."

"And yet we speak of the Unseen—"

"The Man of Dust speaks of it; and, to make him understand, it may sometimes be necessary to employ his terms. He has other such expressions, too, in his vocabulary. He has a beyond the veil, and a beyond the clouds, and a beyond the tomb, and a dozen other misleading tokens. But there is no Beyond. There is only a universal Here! There is only an ever-present Now! 'No man hath ascended up to heaven,' " Angel quoted again, " 'but Him that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is *in* heaven.' To the true Son of man, who is also the true Son of God, heaven is not another world or an afterworld; it's the only world. It's a state of consciousness He never leaves and of which He never loses the assurances. He has the highest authority for knowing that in it His angels do always behold the face of His Father."

"His angels—yes; but that doesn't necessarily mean Himself."

"Doesn't it? What are angels? Aren't they messengers? Aren't they messages? And haven't you always been sending your messages and messengers straight to Him? In yearnings and prayers and aspirations and hopes, and a thousand other impulses of your being, what have you been doing but sending troops of your angels to see His face? Abandon the inverted reflection on the mortal retina as a necessity for sight—and you see Him at once."

"So you would say that in my present more accurate knowledge of things as they are—"

"You are seeing God as you've always seen Him, even though not so radiantly as now. What more remains is not for me to say, since I am doing only that much myself. All I can affirm is what Jesus of Nazareth affirmed, that to know God is eternal life, and that they who possess even the rudiments of that knowledge shall never and can never die. What the end of that knowledge will be surpasses our capacity to guess at, as God Himself surpasses it. For the present we are the inheritors of love, joy, and peace; and in proportion as we

have them—whatever the stage of our progress out of material beliefs—we see at least the fringe of the robe of Him whose qualities they are."

Thus, to Berkeley Noone the vision of God began to unfold itself. He was seeing where he had supposed himself blind; he was blind in ways in which he thought he had seen. Hymns of praise broke from him spontaneously —not in set phrases, nor with what he had hitherto called melody, nor with singing of the voice; but in an irrepressible gratitude. That nothing of the past was wasted was the theme of his ever-recurring song. To see evil pass into nothingness in the degree to which Dust theories were shaken off was like emerging into sunlit air after existence underground. Once he beheld the unity of life, the unity of purpose, the unity of good, his being became incense, viol, and harp, and he was ready to cast his crown before the Throne, saying:

" 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all

things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.' "

And within the vision of God he saw his wife and children—always busied in ways he didn't understand; always occupied on errands that had nothing to do with him. It was not continuously that he saw them, and it was not near, and it was not all together. They came to him singly, or in groups, or in glimpses. Such communication as he could hold with them was chiefly in a sense of well-being and of mutual love. "You'll come closer to them by degrees," he was informed by his guide. "It's a matter of perception. All things will be possible in the measure in which you free yourself from mortal restrictions."

"But what are they doing?"

"They're about their Father's business, as you and I are."

The answer both rejoiced and troubled him.

"I'm afraid they were not—or they weren't wholly—"

"When you as a Dream Man saw them as other Dream Men? No! But the Dream Man

always misinterprets. The Children of Dust see one another as lying and cheating and hating and killing, and given over to every kind of wickedness and frightfulness. That is the inversion of what they are actually doing as the Children of Light. What puzzles you is that, in throwing off the dream, you are seeing those who are dear to you not as you supposed them to be, but as they are. Each one of them is doing his Father's business, positively and always, no matter what grotesque or hideous perversion the dream consciousness may try to fix on him. In the Reality there is no thwarting of the Almighty, even though mortals pride themselves on being able to do it." He added, gently and yet joyously, "Great is the mystery of being!"

" 'And great is the mystery of godliness,' " the other quoted, in his turn.

"And wonderful is it to emerge from darkness and half lights into the daylight of the Sun of Righteousness."

"But blessed," Berkeley Noone went on, fervently, "are they who, in half lights and dark-

ness, are able to see that they shall emerge quietly, simply, naturally—and not be violently thrust into glories or terrors they cannot understand.

"More blessed are they who learn to live in God as in the One Vast Certainty—which created everyone, and supplies everyone, and defends everyone, and loves everyone; and does it all with unlimited intelligence and might—to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever."

"Amen! and Amen!"

Going West

"There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void;
Thou—Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed!"

—Emily Brontë.

HE WAS not a born fighter, in spite of a big, husky frame through which the urge of physical life was strong. On the contrary, he was a civilian and a business man in every nerve of his body. Eight generations on American soil had bred a type essentially industrious, notwithstanding all the fighting in which the family had been engaged. His father had fought in the Spanish-American War; his grandfather in the Civil War; his great-great-grandfather in the Revolution; farther back, his ancestors in the Connecticut Valley had beaten off the French and Indians for nearly a hundred years.

All that, however, had been alien to the main

purposes of life. It had been incidental, not professional. Its chief influence on Lester lay in the assumption that, men being called for on the borders of Texas and in Mexico, he had no choice but to go. True, he was just beginning, after certain wayward years, to see success as a broker ahead of him; and within the month he had become engaged to Molly Dove. But these considerations could not weigh against the appeal of country, nor annul those traditions of duty that had come to him from the past.

So in the course of time, and with the march of events, he found himself in the enemy trenches, facing a burly blue-eyed Teuton grasping a rifle by the barrel and swinging the butt about his head, while he himself held a bayonet in his hand. Amid the wreckage, the carnage, the tumult, he was desperately trying to recall his instructions as to how to stick the weapon in.

Before telling what happened then, let us go back and follow rapidly the stages by which Lester found himself in a situation which two

or three years earlier he would have laughed out of the list of possibilities.

The son of a well-to-do bookseller in a great Atlantic city, he was an instance of that reaction against the paternal bent with which we are all familiar. His father was a gentle, scholarly man who loved books as books. The Spanish-American campaign had left him with one leg slightly shorter than the other, and the air of a retired general. All his longings had once focused themselves into the hope that his son would enter into, and one day inherit, a business built up on years of diligence and judgment—only to be disappointed.

Lester had no interest in books. He was not only an open-air fellow with a zest for sports, but he had all the inclinations of a genial, jovial soul. Taking wine, women, and song as kindred joys, he chose brokerage as the profession that would give him closest touch with the merry give and take of life.

As a broker he could steal all the time he needed to "root" at games, after he had ceased to play them actively, while the same career

rendered him more free to marry a girl like Molly Dove, a waitress in the café where he generally lunched, to whom his family bitterly objected.

His mother was a small, square-shouldered woman, with a smile so bright that it was difficult for the most penetrating eye to see behind it. Lester had inherited her dark color, her beetling brows, and her vigorous physique. A gay audacity, as real as it looked, was also not the least among the legacies she passed on to her son.

Of his two sisters, Cora resembled the father and Ethelind the mother. Ethelind, too, had that gay audacity, the most patent result of which was to involve her in conflicting love affairs. A wild-eyed thing, she was formed on that permanent-seventeen model that came in with the second decade of the twentieth century and induced all women, whatever their time of life, to dress as schoolgirls. Cora, tall, dignified, reserved, was the graduate of a woman's college, in which it was her ambition one day to hold a professorship. To sisters as

well as parents the stalwart, willful boy would have been the king among young men had it not been for his entanglement with Molly Dove. They could pardon his "wildness," knowing that it would pass, but they found it hard to forgive his choice of a wife in a sphere so much below him. In fact, they did not pardon it at all. In spite of his announcement that the engagement had become definite, no one responded to his invitation to make the acquaintance of the girl.

In the matter of his "wildness" there were already stirrings of a change of heart, though they hardly rose to the level of active consciousness. Such reforms as he made were avowedly in deference to Molly Dove. In cutting out —the term was his—women, wine, and song, he made it clear to himself that he did it, not in obedience to a moral law, but because "Molly asked him to." Molly held the odd conviction that such indulgences were wrong, chiefly because they came in between him and a great mystery, of which he had heard vaguely

all his life, but from which instinctively he turned his mind away.

"There's really no mystery at all," she asserted, in that pretty way of hers which he found at once tranquil and enthusiastic, "no more than there's a mystery about the sun. When we fill the atmosphere with smoke we can't see it; but that doesn't keep the sun from being there. Blow the smoke away, and you find the sunshine as bright as ever."

He liked to hear her talk in that way, though he was not won by her beliefs. Far in the future he saw days when he would have shot the bolt of his temptations and settled down with her into being the "good fellow" she hoped to make of him. In the meantime . . .

But in the meantime came the call. It was the kind of call against which his instincts and his interests both rebelled, but he took it with no more analysis than he gave to the necessity of getting out of bed on a winter's morning. There was no help for it; it was all in the day's work.

His family took it in the same way. It was

as much a matter of course as when Ebenezer Lester shouldered his eighteenth-century musket to defend the stockade against the Iroquois stealing down from Canada. It was as much a matter of course as when Charles E. Lester, the bookseller, rallied to President McKinley against Spain.

It was also a matter of course to Molly Dove. It would postpone the wedding for which she had begun her simple preparations, but she had a curious, secret facility for renouncing her own will. Her right-about-face was made with smiling lips and glistening eyes, and no effort that anyone could see. To Lester she whispered:

"It's going to be all right, dear. Whatever the clash of human wills, there's only one real Ruler in the universe. The closer we can keep in touch with Him the nearer we shall be to the usefulness and happiness which make up what we call our destiny."

"That's all very well." He smiled, patting her hand. "But suppose I'm shot—or die of a fever?"

Her reply would have staggered him if he had not put it down to the sweet and charming eccentricity which made her different from other girls.

"Well, suppose it does happen that in the course of doing your duty this mortal should 'put on immortality'—that's the way the Bible expresses it, you know—wouldn't that be a gain for you? And what's a gain for you couldn't be a loss for me."

He laughed with a great guffaw. "But perhaps we shouldn't be married."

"No; but marriage, after all, is only for time, whereas you and I are bound by all sorts of ties which really belong to eternity."

He took no stock in that, he told her; but he liked her gleaming earnestness in saying it. The aunt who had brought her up must have been a quaint, religious character, he said, to have filled her head with such other-worldly notions. Anyhow, they were different from the anxiety and fear which the family hid behind their stoic calmness, and of which he felt

the twinges within himself as he wound up his affairs.

It was at the time when the possibility of a war with Mexico—or any war at all—struck the imagination of the country as a calamity too horrible to contemplate. There was no question as to the victory, but neither was there a question as to the price that would be paid for it. Men—young men—young Americans, O God!—would be killed—actually killed. Fellows whose places were in shops and offices and factories and banks, whose diversions were the stadium, the seashore, or the woods, would be called on to make the extreme sacrifice at a time when sacrifice of any kind was being pooh-poohed. It was not only monstrous, it was unnatural, a trend of events in the teeth of fate, and against what one might reasonably call the manifest will of God. Lester knew that his family were feeling this, though they never mentioned it; he was feeling it himself. Molly Dove alone seemed to ride on the wave of events like a sea bird on a storm, cradled,

rocked, at ease in her element, secure, serene, sure of both present and ultimate good, whatever might befall.

So there came a Sunday when, after a midday dinner, the family accompanied him to the station and he entrained for camp. He had said good-by to Molly Dove during the forenoon. As no advance had been made to her from the Lester side, she could make none on hers, and so judged it wisest to keep out of sight. Her sweet self-effacement in doing this made Lester swear that he would marry her at the first opportunity, as he steamed away on this opening stage of what was to prove his long, long way.

That way, at the beginning, struck many people as a tortuous, futile way, leading nowhither. There was talk of saluting the flag; there was the occupation of Vera Cruz; there was the withdrawal from Vera Cruz; there were months when the daily headlines bore the names Huerta, Villa, Carranza; and few knew for what reason the young men did not come home.

Then home they began to come, chiefly on furlough, to be sent elsewhere. During one such interval Lester married Molly Dove. It meant a breach with his family, none of whom appeared at the simple ceremony or took any steps to acknowledge the bride. He was compelled to leave her within a month.

In the meanwhile greater wars than any possibility with Mexico had broken out, and the iron entered the whole world's soul. It was only then that the end of the road on which Lester had started out that Sunday when he had entrained came into sight—and he sailed for France.

His life after that could scarcely be distinguished from hundreds of thousands of other lives. One overruling need had bound the manhood of the nation into a solidarity so tense that the individual was swallowed up in it. Lester was no longer a son, a brother, a husband, the father of a coming baby: he was an infinitesimal part of a huge machine, with no more to say in matters of his life and death than the wheel to the man who turns it round.

He could only turn; he could only turn as he was told; he could only turn as millions of other wheels were turning, without volition, without knowledge, and, to a degree that surprised him, without much preference or choice.

In minutes when conscious of himself he could see how little he was the Lester of other days. When he woke up in the morning it was often with a strange, dull wonder as to what he had become, and how and why he had become it. It was like a rebirth—only it suggested a rebirth into hell. In fits of moral nausea, after some phase of a "good time," at any date within the past ten years, he had called down on himself some such fate as that; but he had never looked for it so literally, and right here on earth.

The inevitable came at last. By stages such as have often been described, he found himself in that section of the trenches known to its occupants as Dead Cow Lane. Life there was much as he had expected it to be, though possibly not quite so bad. Its worst feature was in the long, dull hours it allowed for thinking.

He loathed sitting on the fire-step with nothing but a slouch, a grouch, and the wit of his mates to keep him company. All that was humanly repulsive he learned to endure; but when he lounged idly on the fire-step, one leg swung across the other, and a dead cigarette between his lips, he ate his heart out. Molly, waiting for her baby, in a tiny apartment with a kitchenette, was a vision against a background of eyes that seemed to watch for him. His father's were grave; his mother's steely; Cora's earnest; Ethelind's wild. They looked down at him, right there in Dead Cow Lane, in a vigil that made him frantic. When the command came at last to go over the top it brought with it not only terror, but a break in the monotony.

What happened then was also along the lines he had been prepared for. So many tales had been told him, and he had listened with such eagerness that, from the minute of going up the death ladder, he seemed to have been through it all before. Everything went as if it had been rehearsed. He had the lonely feeling on

finding himself in the open other men had described to him. As he ran through the lanes of barbed wire his agony of haste was neither more nor less than theirs. The p'—p'—p'—p'—p'—p'— of the machine guns; the crackling of bullets through the air; the tottering and falling of his comrades, throwing up their arms and tumbling clumsily on backs or faces, were all as if by rule. He had no more consciousness than that. He was neither brave nor afraid; he was only numb. It was something to be done, and he was doing it. He might have been doing it in his sleep—in a nightmare.

On reaching the German trench, which the barrage fire had crumpled into a welter of earth, cement, timbers, uniforms, dead and wounded men, and pots and pans, he practically tumbled in. There was no horror in the minute, because horror has its limits and this had passed beyond them. A wounded German was crawling away to anything that would shelter him, and in order to scramble up Lester had to step on the man's head. The head gave way, with an oath or a groan, but

Lester managed to keep his feet. All round him there was shouting and yelling and cursing, and now and then a demoniac laugh. Every American was trying to kill his German, and the Germans were at bay. Lester, too, was trying to kill. The infection had caught him. Out of the blank, out of the numbness, out of the paralysis of the spirit in which he had run across No Man's Land, something surged up of which he had no time to take account. It didn't wait for him to take account of it. It seized him with a maddening pang —a hate to which he had never supposed his nature could be equal—a hate welling up from the depths of his subconscious self—a hate of the enemy—a hate of the German—a hate of the very first individual who came his way—with a wild accompanying frenzy to stick his bayonet in a heart. "Give 'em hell," were the words with which he had been sent over, and all his life and all his longings and all his love were fused in one red flame to deal out hell as it had been dealt out to him.

How he found himself face to face with a

big, blond Bavarian, whose blue eyes danced with a kind of bloodshot fire as he swung the butt of his rifle like a club about his head, there is no way of telling. It was one of those instances which war supplies by the million in which world rancors, race rancors, and the suppressed irritations of thousands of years sum themselves up in the hearts of two men who have no personal quarrel and who have never set eyes on each other before. It was like an inescapable destiny. The American broker and the peasant actor of Oberammergau had been projected toward each other by an irresistible fate. Behind each were all the generations of rivalry and covetousness and savagery and sin that had sent him forth. Neither was moved by his own impulse. Each was but an instrument of the passions of the past.

Lester was not sure whether or not he saw double—whether or not there were two Bavarians swinging the butts of their rifles, or only one. Those who told the story afterward were in similar doubt. Some declared for two; some for one only; some saw three or four in

that corner of the trench. In any case Lester had found his man; and no emotion he had ever known was half so sweet as this anguish of pain to get him.

Those who told the story afterward laughed as they pictured Lester dancing this way and that to avoid the descending club and slip his bayonet in under it. He dodged, they said, as if he were on springs. Time and time again the Bavarian seemed about to sweep him with a blow to the other end of the trench—but no! Lester was prancing as nimbly as ever, watchful, alert, his aim always at the heart. No one could tell how long this went on, for all observation was crazed. The only thing known for certain was that in the end Lester got his weapon in—and in—and in—to the hilt—to the heart—and that if he had had time to go through the thick body he would have done it.

He didn't have time, and it was here that the testimony was in conflict. One man said that the Bavarian was able to deal a last blow with superhuman strength. Another declared that a second Bavarian dealt it. Of those who

came back some supported one of these assertions, and some the other; but there was no difference of opinion at all on the point that Lester's skull was cracked with a sound like that of a breaking eggshell. His body and his opponent's lay tumbled together in a fierce embrace—the one with a surprised horror in the wide-open blue eyes, while the other—but they only said of Lester that his face was "all bashed in."

Lester's face was "all bashed in," but Lester himself didn't know it. The last thing he remembered was the queer, soft, mushy feeling as his bayonet pierced the Bavarian's uniform and entered his body. His next sensation was that of an emotion, a confused emotion, of sorrow, pity, or disgust.

At first it seemed all that had survived. He himself was safe—somewhere—and the Bavarian had died. He didn't try to move, or open his eyes, or seek to find out to what place they had carried him; he was too comfortable for that. But—a man toward whom he had

no enmity on his own account, who was also perhaps a husband, with a little wife waiting for a baby in an apartment with a kitchenette, that man lay dead, with his, Lester's, bayonet wound in his heart. He was sorry. He remembered his hate; he remembered his passion to kill; he knew it as a blend of all the vengeances that had been stirring in his blood since Belgium had been invaded, and the *Lusitania* had been sunk, and the awful things had begun to pile upon the awful things; but it was a vengeance that began to seem to him beside the mark. It was the kind of revenge man didn't know how to take; the kind of justice he didn't know how to mete out. The innocent were being punished for the guilty, as if a child were hanged because a man had committed a crime. He couldn't say that he reproached himself for his part in that; he knew he had been acting on orders from above; but he was conscious of a deep regret that the world should have grown so stupid that such things had to be.

Otherwise he was resting. He supposed that he must have been wounded, though he could

feel no pain. Oddly enough, when he tested himself for pain he didn't know where to begin. But it was his own immunity, his sense of well-being and security, that sent his thought the more persistently toward the man he had kept from ever returning home.

Trying to fancy what that home was like, he found himself, suddenly but naturally, in a village street, of which the bordering houses, of plaster and timber, had low roofs and picturesque eaves. All round there were mountains.

"This is Oberammergau," he heard in a language he understood. "Here is my home. Let us go in."

They entered without the opening of doors, coming into a room with rafters, small windows, and an air of antiquity. A woman was kneeling beside a bed above which hung a carved wooden crucifix. On each side of her knelt a quaintly dressed child, with hands stiffly pressed together.

"That is my wife," said the voice. "Those are my children. They're praying for me and asking that I shall come home."

"Should you have liked to go home?"

It seemed natural to Lester to ask this question. Everything seemed so natural that he had not yet reached the point of inquiring how it had come about. The Bavarian reflected.

"I should have liked it before knowing what this is. I should like it even now, for their sakes. But since death has to be destroyed in us one at a time it's better for us to be here, don't you think?"

Lester began to be startled. "Here? Where?"

"Wherever it is we are. I don't quite know where that is. Do you? I'm speaking," he continued, "in the old terms of place in the sense of locality, because I don't know what else to do; but locality, of course, is gone. We're in the universal, which makes it difficult for us, after being used to so many limitations, to understand ourselves."

Lester was aware of fear, awe, and irritation all struggling in him together.

"You may be in the universal, as you call it; but—but I've come through."

"We've both come through. The marvel is that we've done it so easily. It's as I expected —only more so."

"As you expected—in what way?"

"Every way; all my life. When your barrage fire began I prayed—"

"Do you fellows *pray?*" Lester asked, in astonishment.

"Oh, some of us—what we used to call prayer—the sort of thing my poor wife and children are doing now—begging—pleading that this or that shall be done—instead of resting in strength, as you and I are."

"I'm not—I'm not—resting in strength."

"Oh, yes, you are! You are, without knowing it. It's what human beings are always doing. They get every kind of good in their lives, and don't know the source from which it comes. You won't know to what your present actual comfort is due till . . ."

But the woman rose from her knees, and so did the children. Wiping away their tears, they began the preparations for a frugal breakfast. As Lester felt the presence that had

accompanied him moving from his side and enveloping all three in tenderness, he found himself alone with his thought again.

There was no shock to him in the fact that, as Molly had expressed it, the mortal had put on immortality; he had faced the possibility for too long. Ever since the first entraining he had accepted it as an eventuality of war. On sailing for France he knew there were increased chances against his ever coming back. In the months that followed he grew accustomed to death and more or less obtuse to it. He smoked and chaffed in the morning with fellows who by noon had gone—who could tell where? They used the euphemism of "going west"—into the sunset, into the glory, into the great repose. It was the easiest thing to say, and many a time he had said it of himself. "By this time next year I may have gone west." Then it became: "By this time next month I may have gone west." Later it was: "By this time tomorrow—" "Within an hour—" "Within half an hour—" "Within ten minutes—" as the seconds slipped away.

Well, he had gone west! The odd thing was that he had done it so easily, so painlessly. The tedious hours in the trenches faded more or less from recollection. The going over the top and all that followed after it became nothing but a blur. Even the months in camp, in Texas, behind the lines in France, dissolved like vapors when they mount into the air. What was present to him most forcibly was the thought of the dear ones he had left behind.

His own conditions were entirely a matter of course; he was perfectly at home in them. Though he could not have described them, he knew that they were pleasant and that they were profoundly rooted in nature. He was neither surprised at them nor unduly curious.

Neither was he lonely. His sufficiency was such that companionship as he had always conceived of it was not a consideration. The condition in itself was companionship to a degree he could not understand. It was vibrant with life; there was speech in it. Had he been forced to make explanations, he would have said there was intelligence in it, and compre-

hension. He let himself sink into the enjoyment of it as a baby rests without questioning in the love by which it is enlapped. No; he wasn't lonely; he didn't know what loneliness was.

But he felt care—the care for Molly, the fear of the blow that would fall on his father and mother and sisters. Now that he knew what had happened, his thought fixed itself on finding some way by which he could help them.

On this point he wondered why, if the Bavarian could return to his home and whisper something of comfort, he could not return to his. Distance was not a factor, since it was no part of the universal. Even the gulf between the material and the nonmaterial could in a measure be crossed. Why, then, could he not cross it?

"Is it because I've been such a bad fellow?" he asked himself.

"Not entirely," the Bavarian answered, as if the words had been addressed to him. "It isn't a question of what we've done so much as it is of what we know. It's a matter of

thought, of consciousness. When we've learned that everything exists in a great mind, that mind itself becomes the medium of intercourse. Give up the idea that the people you love live in one sphere and you in another. We all live together in one great intelligence that understands all our needs. Meet your needs not by your own efforts, but by coöperation with that intelligence, and what you want will be done."

Lester reflected on that. "What do you mean by coöperation?"

"Trust, in the first place—till trust becomes knowledge."

"But if this intelligence knows already what I need—?"

"It will do the right thing, only you won't be associated with it. What you want is the association, to have your part. You don't get your part, you don't have the association, because you isolate yourself. Your mind is closed to the powers and activities that are all about you. When you understand what they are you will have your share in them."

"But why should my mind be closed if yours is open?"

"It's a matter of habit. We go on here from the very point at which we left off there. I had the habit already. Our life at Oberammergau bred it into us. You didn't have it. Your thoughts were limited to a physical world, and a physical body and a physical way of doing everything. Now you have it all to learn, very much as you had in your physical childhood."

"Then I'm not being punished for my sins?"

He asked the question in some uneasiness.

"You are. Don't you see? The punishment is that you're not more advanced. You've been like the idle boy in school; and now you find it hard to catch up. If it were not for the great thing you've done you'd be farther behind than you are."

"The great thing I've done? I don't understand you."

"Every good act helps us onward; and among things that are good love is the greatest. Of that you've given the highest proof there is."

Lester was astounded.

"I?"

"You gave the most precious things you had —your business, your happiness, your family, your wife, your life. You held nothing back. You not only gave without reserve, but you gave without complaining. You didn't do it for yourself, but for a great cause—as men conceive of causes—and you did it of your own free will."

"And so did you."

"No; I waited to be taken. If I hadn't been taken I shouldn't have gone. I didn't offer myself up; I was seized against my will. You were the more like Jesus of Nazareth, Who laid down His life for His friends, and so, as He said Himself, losing your life you have found it."

"Oh, but I didn't do it in that way at all," Lester protested.

"It doesn't take anything away from right that we do it as a matter of course. We don't have to know the infinite intelligence to have

the infinite intelligence know us. Isn't it a case of 'He that doeth the Will'? If we do the Will instinctively we can't fail of the protection of Him whose Will is done; and if we don't know Him already we can be sure He will make Himself known."

Communication once more came to an end, not abruptly, but by natural cessation, because the thought had been expressed.

But Lester was left with a clue to follow, and little by little he followed it. The immediate gain was a new kind of perception. It was as if some faculty already possessed, but paralyzed within him, had been freed. He could not have said that this endowment existed in hearing, or sight, or any of the senses, or in all of them together, or in none of them. All he could say was that it gave him a new use of power, of power to which he had a right, but of which, for a reason that escaped him, he had hitherto been deprived.

As with this power there came freedom, expansion, and growth, he found himself able

to reconstruct out of thought the house he had formerly called home.

He was back in it all at once—without effort, without coming from a distance, without journeying through space, without meeting the discords between timelessness and time. He was simply there, walking about the rooms and halls as he had done ever since his childhood.

He judged it to be evening, for his father was at home. It was what he, Lester, had wanted. His appeal was to be for Molly, that the family should pity her, should take her in, should make her one of themselves, and help her through the time that was ahead of her. He knew his appearing might be a shock to them, but it would be a shock to his father least of all.

The father was seated in the dining room, reading a book by an electric lamp. When the supper was cleared away, he could have this room to himself. It was a cheerful room, with deep-red curtains drawn, and a deep-red cloth on the table. Lester entered without

journeying through space, much as he had been in the habit of entering all his life. His sense of presence, of vitality, was so strong that he wondered his father did not look up.

"Father!"

But the father kept on reading.

"Father!"

There was no indication that he had been heard.

He went nearer. He placed himself where he must be seen. He spoke with more force.

"Father! I want to talk to you about Molly."

The father turned a page. Lester could hear the rattle of the paper. He could hear the little cough when his father cleared his throat. He could see the dark shade in his father's cheeks which showed he needed shaving. There was nothing about that well-known face obscure or unfamiliar; but he could make no sign of his coming that could be recognized.

Presently Cora came in and sat down. She began to talk about the book in her father's

hands. To Lester it was like something on the stage, something done by human beings, but not part of life's reality. It struck him for the first time that mortal happenings pass in a realm of illusion.

From the fact that Cora was in colors he inferred that the news from France had not yet reached them.

"Cora," he said, "I want to talk to you about Molly."

"Oh, it's interesting enough," Cora admitted, in response to something said by her father, "especially the first part; but so trivial. If the dead really do live again I should think they'd find some better occupation than playing with a ouija board."

"A ouija board," the father argued, "might be only the simplest means they can find of getting their messages over."

"Then, since they're so limited in what they can do, why shouldn't they tell us something worth our knowing, when they've got the opportunity? This boy"—she waved her hand

toward the book—"does no more than describe the same old life as on earth—with variations."

"But perhaps with variations they *live* the same old life as on earth."

"Then I don't want to believe in it." Cora's manner was decisive and professional as such manners are depicted by actresses. "As a matter of fact," she summed up, "the more I think and the more I read, the less I'm inclined to accept a life beyond the grave as a possibility. Such books"—again she indicated that in her father's hand—"express a natural human yearning, as do also the myths of the New Testament, but . . ." She left her sentence there. The father, too, left it there, as if at heart he agreed with her.

"I wonder where mother is," Lester asked himself, and immediately was in her room upstairs.

She was seated before a mirror, trying on a hat. Another hat was on a chair beside her. Two bandboxes with a disarray of silver paper stood beside her on the floor. Ethelind, short-

skirted, and moving with nimble, sylphlike feet, was standing back to get the effect.

"I think I like that one the better of the two," she was saying, "and yet I don't know but—"

"Oh, they're awful, both of them," the mother complained. "It's funny I can never get a hat that suits me but the same old thing."

Lester went forward. He meant that she should see him first in the mirror. The reflection would startle her, of course, but he should be able to reassure her.

It was he who was startled first, since, standing before the mirror, he didn't get his own reflection. He felt so solid, so warm, so full of energy, that it seemed to him impossible that a reflection should not be cast. But there was nothing—nothing but the image of his mother casting her bright eyes up at the cockatoo crest on a hat that suggested a Mephistopheles.

"Mother, I want to talk to you about Molly."

"Oh dear! What an old hag I'm beginning to look!"

"Oh no, you're not, mother dear," Ethelind returned, cheerfully. "That's just worry. One of these days the war will be over and he'll be coming back a great general—"

"What's the use of the war being over and his coming back a great general, when that creature will have the first say in him?"

Ethelind came behind her mother, to give the hat a twitch to a more effective angle.

"Mother dear, I don't believe he'd like to have you talk in that way."

Lester appealed to his sister:

"Ethelind, I want you to help me. I want you all to think of Molly. I'm not coming home; but I'm well and happy. That is, I could be happy if I only knew that she was being taken care of and that you were good to her."

But Ethelind only twitched the hat again, and the subject dropped. As it did, a curtain seemed to come down on the scenes that had meant home to him, once more suggesting the action of a play.

There followed for Lester a further phase of

unfolding thought, though with no solution of some of his perplexities.

"But it's always so," the Bavarian explained to him. "We can go to them more easily than they can come to us. The spiritual can to some slight degree reëmbody the material; but spiritual things are only spiritually discerned. Jesus of Nazareth after His Resurrection could at times reincarnate Himself before His disciples; but they could not spiritualize themselves so as to follow Him when He disappeared. That can be accomplished only in proportion as they lay off the mortal and temporary by degrees, or burst out of it with a bound, as you and I did."

And yet in Lester's consciousness the vibrancy of life in his surroundings grew more tense. It was as if he were rising and ever rising on a mounting wave of vitality, but always riding on the top. Something like this energy he had felt in running, or rowing, or swimming, or on horseback, or in one or another of the sports in which he had excelled; but never with this joyousness of strength. The

physical had given some sign of it, though it had been no more than as the single note of a shepherd's pipe to the fullness of an orchestra, or as the tramp of a lone step to the onrush of a million men.

And in one such swelling, exultant, glorious moment he came where Molly was in her little living room in the apartment with a kitchenette. She was sitting at a table with two or three books before her. One of them was open and to it from time to time she dropped her eyes. She raised them soon again to look straight into the air, as if she saw beyond walls into the reality where he was. There was no trouble in her eyes, nor sorrow, nor anxiety. In every feature there was peace, with the look of expectation.

He did not try at once to enter into communication with her. It was enough for him to study the pure face with its expression of repose. But he followed her thought as her eyes fell to the page of the book again. It was as if he were reading the words himself:

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. . . . If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

She lifted her eyes and reflected on that. He drew nearer, bending over and about her.

"Molly, I'm here."

He saw her expression brighten. It was almost as if she had said, "Yes, I know."

"I want you to know, darling, that I'm not coming home."

Whatever was passing through her mind, she nodded, though no shade fell on her bright face.

"I'm well," he continued. "You must think of me as happy and as taken care of."

Again there was that nod, as if she assented to something she had heard. Presently she began to read again:

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and

power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

"That enemy is destroyed, Molly. I've proved it. There's no death; there's nothing but life. There's not even a shock, nor a minute of unhappiness. There's nothing but life, and then more life, and then life again. I was never so alive as I am at this instant, or so capable of doing things. Except for you, Molly, sweet one, and the baby that's coming, and the family, I wouldn't go back."

If her eyes grew grave it was with thought and not with foreboding. She returned once more to her book:

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

"Yes," he said to her, "that is what has happened to me. Death has been swallowed up

in victory. If strength and energy and safety and joy constitute victory, then I'm victorious. If it were not for you, O my love . . ."

But she closed her book suddenly and rose. As she did so he could hear the words she uttered, almost aloud.

"I must do that," she said, with determination. "It's what he'd like. I must take it on myself."

He lost her for a while, and when he saw her again she was in the open air. He was with her, though not exactly by her side. As far as he could judge he was both leading her and following her. He was above her, and was also holding her hand. If he could have been everywhere about her at one and the same instant, it was that.

It seemed to be Sunday. There was no work going on in the streets, and there was the Sunday air of leisure. Molly walked rapidly, her eyes toward the ground. Her whole little figure expressed concentration of purpose.

He knew the suburb. The shady streets, the

trim green lawns, the low stone walls with vines tumbling over them, the wooden houses painted for the most part in dull tones of red and yellow, were those with which he had always been familiar. High on a knoll he saw the deep verandas of his own old home. Molly did not hesitate. She turned in at the gate.

There was a short driveway, between clumps of shrubbery and under elms. At a sudden turning she met Ethelind. The two girls stopped and looked at each other as they came face to face.

"You're Ethelind, aren't you?" Molly said, without trembling or awkwardness.

Ethelind's wild eyes were all ablaze.

"Yes, and you're Molly. I'm—I'm so glad you've come. I've wanted to know you. I was coming one day to see you—I don't care what anyone says. I know it's what my brother would want me to do. We—we miss him so."

"Thank you," Molly said, with a gentle smile. "I'm glad you thought of me so kindly. Just now there's something I want to say to

your father or mother. Do you think either of them would see me?"

Ethelind's face fell. "I—I can't say—for sure. They're— Oh, I don't know!—But my brother—"

"Yes, I know all that; but this is something important."

The girl seized the sister-in-law's arm. "It —it isn't—anything you've—you've heard?"

"It's nothing I've heard; it's only something that I feel I know."

But they had been seen from the window. The mother came running out, all her gay audacity transformed, as a lamp is transformed when, instead of giving light, it becomes the center of conflagration.

"Oh, what is it? What is it?" she cried, as she hurried toward them.

"It's nothing very definite, Mrs. Lester," Molly replied, calmly. "It's only something I feel so strongly that—"

"Oh, feel!" Mrs. Lester exclaimed, impatiently. "Don't frighten us with feelings when—"

"Is Mr. Lester in? I should like to talk to him as well."

The mother led the way toward the house. Molly followed, Ethelind clinging to her arm. It did not occur to any of them that no further explanation had been made as to who Molly was. That seemed to take itself for granted.

The father was in the hall at the foot of the stairs. Cora was coming down them. Both had been summoned by the sense of something wrong. Molly went straight to her husband's father.

"Oh, I want to tell you, Mr. Lester; I feel I have a message."

"Feel you have a message?" he echoed, with a kind of tremulous severity. "What do you mean by that?"

"I don't know what I mean; only this morning he—he seemed to come and stand beside me—"

"Nonsense!" It was Cora who said that, from the position in which she had come to a standstill halfway down the stairs. To Molly she seemed very magisterial and commanding.

"Nonsense!" she repeated. "This is pure nervousness—or hysterics."

"No, it isn't, Miss Lester," Molly contradicted, not rudely, but with imploring earnestness. "I'm sure he did come. He spoke to me. *Something* spoke to me."

"Did you hear anything?" the mother demanded.

"No, it wasn't in words; or if it was in words it was only as it turned itself into words in my own mind. It was more like—like a conviction—an intense conviction—that came to me from outside."

"And what did your conviction say?" Cora inquired, icily.

"It said— Oh, you must forgive me!—I shouldn't come if I didn't feel it so strongly!—It's as hard for me as it is for you—"

The father backed away to the baluster. His face had grown gray. The mother dropped to a hall chair. Ethelind was crying already, but standing by as if to give aid. Cora was still commanding and severe. It was she who interrupted.

"Yes, we understand all that. But tell us what you've come to say."

Under this authority and severity Molly began to grow nervous. She clasped and unclasped her hands, sometimes twisting her fingers.

"You see, it was this way. I was reading the Bible and—and thinking—and trying to understand what it meant—when all at once he—he seemed to be with me—and to be saying things."

"What sort of things?"

"I don't exactly know, Miss Lester. I knew he was there—and that he was telling me how beautiful it was with him—but I can't explain how he made me understand it—"

"No," Cora interrupted again, "nobody ever can explain. Once they get notions into their heads, they seem to think explanations are not important." She came down to the second lowest step, but still stood over the trembling young wife in her attitude of authority. "This is all nerves, my dear—and excitement. The book you were reading—oh yes, it's a very good

book, and full of the wisdom of the ages and all that! But it reacted on you in such a way that you've conjured up these frightening things—"

"But I'm not frightened at all," Molly burst out. "That's the wonderful part of it. If he hadn't come and told me beforehand, and made me feel how happy he is, I should have been. But I'm not now; and I don't want you to be. That's why I came."

"Yes; no doubt," Miss Lester agreed, coldly. "But now that you've come, you'll do well to run home again and try to calm yourself and be sensible. If my brother has been"—she stumbled at the word, but forced herself to utter it—"if my brother has been—k-killed—we shall hear of it from the proper authorities."

"Cora, that's not fair," Ethelind cried indignantly. "Molly's come over here to warn us, and even if she's wrong—" She broke off to make another sort of appeal. "Father, can't you say something? Here's your son's wife—the mother of the child he's expecting—"

But Mrs. Lester rose, still clinging to her chair.

"If this is a ruse for getting into our house and making our acquaintance whether we would or no—"

"Mother, how can you?" came from Ethelind. "You deserve that your son should never be given back to you. Father, can't you say anything at all?"

But what the father did say was uttered brokenly. "I don't—I don't believe it. He's not—not dead. She's come here to get us to own her—to take her in—"

"And if we don't," Ethelind cried, "and she goes away again, I'll go with her. Whether he comes back or not I shall be there."

It was extraordinary to Lester that he could look on at this scene without conscious pain. It was exactly as if he had watched them rehearsing a play in which emotions were simulated but not experienced. When the rehearsal was over they would become their actual selves again. Beyond hardness and suffering and misunderstanding he could see the end.

He could see the end as Molly cast an imploring look around her and prepared to depart. Ethelind, who was already in street clothes, gave all signs of going with her. Over them both Lester threw the protection of his love, which apparently gave them nerve. Neither of them flinched; but it was in Molly that the real valor shone. She was both quiet and firm as she took her few steps toward the door, Ethelind clinging to her arm.

But at the door there was a ring, and on the porch outside there stood a boy with a telegram in his hand.

"Charles E. Lester live here?"

Ethelind seized the envelope, while with feverish fingers Cora signed for it. The father took it in his hands and held it helplessly.

The mother uttered one great cry.

"Open it!"

He opened it—read it—and let it flutter to the floor.

Cora snatched it up; but she, too, dropped it after a hurried glance. She stood as if turned to stone.

The mother took it—sat down deliberately—read it carefully—read it again—read it again—and folding it, slipped it into the bosom of her gown.

Molly and Ethelind had not waited. They had not needed to hear the news. Rather they were eager to run away. It was Molly, however, who pressed onward, dragging the other with her—out to the porch, down the steps—on to the driveway.

The three in the hallway remained as if paralyzed, without tears, without words, seemingly without thoughts.

The mother came first to the possession of her faculties.

"Stop her," she cried, in a deep, tragic voice like a man's. "Stop her. Bring her back." She struggled to her feet, hurrying toward the door. "She's my dead son's wife. He spoke to her. He's not dead. He's alive. If he wasn't alive he couldn't have come to her. Stop her. Call her back. She's my child. Nothing shall take her away from me."

Lester saw the two girls pause, while Ethelind whispered:

"Go back. She's calling you."

Slowly Molly turned round. Slowly she mounted the steps of the veranda. The vision faded out as Lester saw his mother's arms go round the neck of his young wife and draw her close.

But it faded out in radiance. It also faded out in confidence. He was not only at peace, he was at peace with the certainty of a vast readjustment.

It was readjustment in himself first of all —the adaptation of the "fan" at ball games, and of the broker of the Street, to the eternities of which he could just discern the beginnings.

Then it would be the readjustment of his family—to one another—to Molly—to their memory of him. A new kind of tenderness would settle down among them with a new and farther outlook.

It would be the readjustment, too, of his

country—to a new world position—to a wider world responsibility.

And it would be the readjustment of nations to nations, and of men to men. The blind hatreds that had hurled him against the Bavarian and the Bavarian against him would cease. Their folly would be recognized. Of the blood that had been shed, and was still to be shed, this would be the recompense. It would be shed to its highest purpose when it should be shown that it had not been shed in vain.

Soon those who were in the turmoil that mortals create for one another would have come west like himself—into the sunset, into the glory, into the great repose. They would come into the great activities, too, where work never ceases, and strength never tires, and love never wanes. And as he turned into the radiance he felt content to wait patiently for that.

VI

The Last Enemy

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

—St. Paul.

IN WANDERING away from the encampment I must have gone farther than I supposed, for presently I saw I was alone, with nothing but the wide, sad prospect of Judean hills about me. Deep down on the left the leaden gleam of the Dead Sea at the base of the mountains of Moab gave the only relief to the eye in this world of dull gray barrenness. I was about to return to camp when at a distance of perhaps twenty yards I saw ashes and refuse marking the spot on which some band of nomads had recently pitched their tents. It was a natural impulse to go the necessary few steps onward, even though ashes and refuse would be the only reward for my curiosity.

This was so nearly the case that after a minute's idle inspection I was turning away, when

suddenly my attention was caught by what I took to be a stone of peculiar formation. Gray on gray, it lay unobtrusively, a stick of stone, some eight inches long, and three or four in circumference. Countless ages of attrition, I was beginning to say to myself, must have been needed to wear it away to this smoothness and straightness, till I remembered that here on this hilltop which the sea had not reached for millions of years no such attrition had been possible. To have taken this evenness of form it must have been worked by the hand of man.

On going down the gentle slope, for it lay just below me, I saw that it was not a stone, but a leaden cylinder. Wedged into a seam in the rock it had either fallen there by accident or been cast aside by some one impatient of the task of carrying it about. Looking carefully around me to make sure I was not the victim of a plot, I dislodged it with some force, finding it light enough and small enough to go into a large pocket. Then I went back to camp.

What the cylinder contained I could only

guess, having no immediate opportunity of definitely finding out. In the camp all my actions were subject to the observation of the dragoman and his servants. If I was seen opening a cylinder obviously ancient, and not without some value in itself even if it were empty, I should be suspected. The thing might easily be some lost object of veneration, known throughout that series of tribes whose relations with one another are always mysterious to outsiders. At any rate, I ran no risk. The cylinder did not leave my person till I reached, a few days later, the comparative safety of a hotel bedroom in Damascus.

It proved then to contain what I suspected, a parchment manuscript. I could see that the writing was in Latin, but beyond this elementary fact I had no knowledge. Impressively old it seemed to me, worn at the edges, stained, and yet for the most part intact. The writing was in a flowing hand, with contractions and little flourishes. No learning that I possessed threw any light on the thing's historic value. The cylinder itself seemed to be faintly en-

graved with a Byzantine conception of the Risen Christ, rubbed down by the handling of many generations.

But it chanced that on the voyage from Beyrut to Marseilles I fell in with a man whom I had known a few years earlier as exchange French professor at Harvard. Renewing the old acquaintanceship, I became confidential on the subject of my "find." As, however, his field was philosophy, his opinion on the document, of which he could decipher no more than isolated words, was not much more expert than my own. On the other hand, he gave me an introduction to a colleague at the university of Montpellier, whose specialty was precisely in the reading and appraising of all kinds of ancient scripts.

In the end I received from him some three or four expressions of opinion, of which one was his own, and the others those of scholars in the same line of work. All agreed that the narrative given in the text was that of a genuine experience, though judgments differed as to whether or not the version in the cylinder

were the original. Three out of four declared it to be a very ancient copy. The fourth held it possible that we had in our possession a genuine manuscript of the latter half of the first Christian century.

In the question of date I was personally less interested than in that of authenticity. To have a few pages torn from one of those many lives which must have touched incidentally that of Jesus Christ struck me as far more important than that the parchment and ink, or the hand that used them, should have belonged to this era or to that. A copy was good enough for me, so long as I could feel that actual facts had been transmitted.

As to that the experts seemed to be agreed. Some one named Galba, a Roman by family, though born at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee, had in middle or old age written down what he remembered of his intercourse during boyhood with a Wondrous Personality. Living then in Britain, and hearing the name of Jesus of Capernaum, as he commonly calls Him, proclaimed as the Founder of a new religion,

he sets down for his children and grandchildren the memories he has treasured all his life. He seems not to have been a Christian in the accepted sense of the term, nor to have known till shortly before writing that his own recollection of the Wondrous Personality had become a tradition for others. In the formation of the infant Christian Church he had had no part, learning of its existence only after years of vicissitude in outlying parts of the Empire.

As to the story of the manuscript itself we had nothing to go on but surmise. Apparently by the fourth Christian century it was recognized by its owner as a priceless possession. The cylinder had then been made for its protection. The faint engraving of the Risen Christ, with a still fainter background of a line of cypresses, was not later than Justinian and Theodora. It might easily have been the treasure of some monastery, or of some princely house, till the looting of the Empire after the conquest by the Turks destroyed such objects, or scattered them. None the less this particular relic would seem to have been guarded with

much care, perhaps with some superstition, as a talisman secret and sanctified. It had probably not been thrown away in the place where I had found it, but dropped in a hasty breaking camp.

The translation made for me at Montpellier was of course in French. My English translation of this French translation loses, I am told, most of the antiquity of style, as well as all the rusticity of thought and expression so naïve in the original. I have only to add that as in the script itself there is neither punctuation, sentence, nor paragraph; these have been added by myself.

For several lines at the beginning only scattered words are legible.

" . . . father . . . stone mason . . . Tiberias . . . baths . . . never . . . architecture . . . workmen . . . Italian. . . ."

From the text as it goes on we gather that what had been written was to the effect that the author's father had been an Italian stone mason, brought to Tiberias at the time of the

building of the sumptuous baths in the foreign style erected there by the Herods. For this task workmen could not be found in Galilee, the Hebrews never having developed an architecture of their own beyond what met the simplest necessities. It was well known to the historian that in building those cities of Gentile magnificence, Tiberias and Cæsarea Philippi, the Herods had been obliged to bring artisans from Tyre, Sidon, Egypt, Greece, and Italy, young Galba's father being one of them.

From further fragments of sentences we learned that the lad had been born at Tiberias, and had been left an orphan while still very young, a Gentile orphan in a land so hostile to Gentiles of any age that even helplessness stirred no pity. Almost as long as he could remember the child had been an outcast, living by his wits.

"In the Jews' country of Galilee," he writes, "this was no great hardship. For the support of life little is required, and little they have ever had. Their houses are simple, and from our Italian point of view flimsily constructed.

Low, square, and flat, they rarely consist of more than a single room, with a mat, a chest, and a few earthen pots for the furnishings. Even for the Galileans this would be too wretched were it not for the roof on which most of the life of the family is spent. Here they eat and sleep, except in seasons of rain or storm, while from the roof to the fields or the orchards the transition is not great. In my boyhood I slept where night overtook me. The climate being soft and sweet, it was seldom cold. Of clothing and food we required little. That little could be begged or stolen. I, Galba, was mostly obliged to steal, for when they knew I was a Gentile boy they drove me from their doors. True, I could often deceive in this respect, being as proficient in the Jews' language as any son of their own; but they judged me by my countenance. The Jews' land of Galilee harboring many Gentiles, the housewives were suspicious even of those who spoke their tongue.

"But, sleeping in the fields, eating when food chanced to come my way, drinking of the

brooks, and wearing the garments more favored boys had cast aside as too ragged to cover nakedness, I contrived to live. From town to town around the Sea of Galilee I wandered, sometimes earning a few pence, but more often finding food and shelter as the birds and foxes do.

"Being then about twelve years old, that from which I suffered most was the lack of love. Other boys had homes, parents, brothers, playmates, schools. I, Galba, had nothing. If I ventured to join in a game being played in the market place the lads of the town stoned me. If I drew near to a school, the teacher drove me thence. If in some vineyard or olive garden I found work, I was beaten, and often denied my pay, when it became known that I was of Gentile parentage. Lying in the fields at night, I wept from anger and loneliness.

"And since I saw nothing but hatred and contempt, I grew to hate and despise everyone. My hope was one day to be big and strong, so that I might do ill to those who had done ill to me. When any such opportunity came to

me I wrought what harm I could. I would rise at night to break the branches of the olive trees or pull up the shoots of grain. Then I passed on, putting myself beyond detection before sunrise. When I found children feebler than myself I evil-entreated them, snatching their food, and leaving them in tears. With older and stronger lads I frequently did battle, rending their garments and bruising their features, regretting only that I had no means of killing them. All this I did to be revenged, yet finding in my vengeance but small consolation.

"Then it chanced that roaming one day between two towns I saw a multitude of men and women streaming from one of the cities and making their way up a mountain side. Not daring to ask questions, I listened to what was said by one and another, so learning that they were on the way to hearken to the words of one Jesus of Capernaum. Of this man I had heard much, some saying that he was a deceiver; some that he was a prophet; while all agreed that by the help of either God or

Sathanas—the dispute was as to which—he worked great cures and wonders. Having nothing better to do, I hung on the outskirts of this throng, recking little of the curses to which I was inured, and hoping to see a miracle. Of those who journeyed with me I gathered that this was also the chief motive, though some seemed to be his disciples. As for me, Galba, I had little thought beyond curiosity, with the possible chance of picking up some article dropped by accident, or of filching a little food.

"Later, as I skirted the seated throng looking for the place from which I was least likely to be driven, I heard a voice of which the very tones caused me to stand still. Loving and commanding at once, it was strong with the strength which penetrates, and makes every syllable distinct. Accustomed as I was to the raucous Galilean dialect, it was a strange new wonder in itself to perceive that there could be anything so sweet in human speech.

"Never man spoke like this man. As it is among the many things to be regretted that we know no way by which to preserve the

sound of a voice, so we have no language by which to convey its beauty to one who has not heard it. When I have said that this voice was music I have still said nothing to express its entrancing qualities. Though at first I saw not the speaker, he seemed to have seen me, and among all that throng to be addressing me.

" 'But I tell you who hear me, Love your enemies; treat those that hate you well; bless those who curse you; pray for those who abuse you.'

"In on my bitterness of spirit these words came like balm, soothing that hatred which was poisoning my life. A child of twelve has no impulse to hate. Love is the meat he thrives on, and the air he knows how to breathe. The thought that I could love those who hated me came to my oppressed young soul like relief from a madness within me.

"In among the multitude I thrust myself till at last I saw him. No more than I could give you the sound of his voice can I tell you what he was like. The memory which remains with me is that of power and graciousness.

Never have I seen elsewhere such capacity to overawe crowds and stand alone. Never was anyone so strong, and yet so winning and courteous. I have heard him spoken of as grave, sorrowful, austere, but of this I never saw anything. In my knowledge of him he was the embodiment of happiness. He inspired courage. Health, sanity, energy emanated from him, as youth and activity did likewise. You could not come into his presence without the conviction that here was the norm of perfect joy in which your own conditions, however afflicting, must be amended.

"These thoughts I could not have had as a boy; they have come to me in later life as an explanation. All I was capable of seeing at the time was that here was some one who would not turn me away. He would take me in my rags and welcome me. He might even love me. Already I loved him. My one instinctive purpose was to reach him.

"But in this I was hindered by the multitude. They held me back as one who had no right; they closed up their ranks against me so that

I could not descend. He himself was seated on a mound in a little hollow, round which rose a series of natural turf-covered ridges like the seats in an amphitheater. As, in spite of all obstructions, I forced my way to the bottom, some one pushed me angrily and I stumbled forward. Thus I came into his presence with a cry, a sorry little lad, friendless and dirty, with hot tears streaming from my eyes.

"At my cry he interrupted his discourse to look at me where I lay in shame. All my fear was that he would rebuke me, but when in terror I lifted my eyes he only smiled. With a movement of his left arm he made me understand that close by his side there was a place for me. 'Come here.'

"But I could not move. 'Master,' I moaned, 'I dare not. I am but a Gentile and an outcast.'

"The sweetness of his smile played over me like sunlight. 'In the Kingdom of Heaven,' he answered, 'there is neither outcast nor Gentile, but only the child of my Father.'

" 'But, Master,' some among the crowd pro-

tested, 'the boy is a thief, known as a rogue and vagabond in all our towns.'

" 'When he has a home,' came the reply, 'he will be so no longer.' To me he added, 'Your home is in my Father's house. Come!'

"As a poor dog creeps I crept to him. Throwing his arm about my shoulder, he went on with his discourse. He seemed to be telling of a kingdom which he called the Kingdom of Heaven. The words themselves I did not understand. I recall not that I listened. Merely to sit beside him, within the refuge of his arm, was all the bliss I could ask for. Never before that I could remember had my child's weakness known the solace of protection.

"But presently I heard him speaking words which, like those I had heard on arriving, seemed specially addressed to me. Now and then, at certain points, he pressed me to him the more closely, as if to summon my attention.

" 'No slave can belong to two masters, for he will either hate one and love the other, or stand by one and make light of the other.

You cannot serve God and money. Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about life, wondering what you will have to eat or drink, or about your body, what you will have to wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body than clothes? Look at the wild birds. They do not sow or reap, or store food in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more account than they? But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to life? Why should you worry about clothing? See how the wild flowers grow. They do not toil or spin, and yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendor was not dressed like one of them. But if God so beautifully dresses the wild grass, which is alive today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will He not more surely clothe you, you who have so little faith? So do not worry and say, What shall we have to eat? or, What shall we have to drink? or, What shall we have to wear? For these are all things the heathen are in pursuit of. But you must make His kingdom and up-

rightness before Him your greatest care, and you will have all these other things besides.'

"When he had finished he stood up, the whole multitude rising, too. Many who were sick came begging him to heal them, while those who could not draw near of their own strength had themselves borne by others. 'Master, if you choose, you can cure me,' were the kind of words I heard. 'I do so choose; be cured,' would come as the reply.

"In the confusion of these crowds I slipped away. I did this partly because of a boy's shame of his own emotions, partly because I was anxious not to embarrass one who had been so good to me by clinging to his protection. But once more going forth alone, I did so with a lighter heart than I had ever known before. Jesus of Capernaum had been a friend to me. If I never saw him again, that friendship would still be the invigoration of my life. In the days that followed, among the throngs which pressed about him everywhere, I forced myself in, scanning his beloved countenance and hang-

ing on his words, though keeping myself unseen.

"This I did while making the effort to bless those who cursed me, to treat those who ill-used me well, and to pray for them who abused me. Strangely, too, it seemed to me that in proportion as I tried to do this those who had aforetime been cruel to me showed some sign of relenting. Certain it is that I was neither robbed nor beaten quite so much, while such names as, Dog of a Gentile! were flung at me less frequently. When they were I sought some opportunity to do a kindness toward those who uttered them, often confounding their harshness, though sometimes receiving but blows in return. Nevertheless, I persisted, and when smitten I did my best to pray for those who smote me.

"This was the more difficult seeing that I knew no God. Of our Roman gods I had heard so little that beyond such a name as Jupiter or Mars I had no learning. To the Jews' God I knew myself to be abhorrent. When, therefore, I put up my petition all I

could think of was to lift my heart to the Father of Jesus of Capernaum. Reasoning that the Father of such a Son would not say me nay, I went before Him boldly, and do so to this day.

"Of the Son himself I lost no going, no coming, and no word. Wherever he was in public there was I. Near the house in which he lodged was a garden of olives in which I could lie and watch his door. If he came out I followed him, keeping out of sight, but always with the distant vision of his person to encourage me. So it came about that I learned his ways, and often knew his errands before he set out on them. There were servants and disciples whom I could question, and who, seeing that I loved him, not seldom answered me.

"To do something for him who had done so much for me was that on which all my desire was set. For this I worked and saved money. Each day in a vineyard brought me in half a denarius. This I hoarded in an old leathern wallet I had one day found in the street of a town and now hung round my neck, inside

my gaberdine, for safety. Work being scarce, and my pay sometimes refused me after I had toiled for it, it was long before I had the three whole denarii I judged to be enough for the honoring of my Lord. Then on a day I learned that it was his purpose to journey next morning to Nazareth in the mountains, where he had lived earlier. Furthermore, he was to go alone, which would give me my opportunity.

"For I had observed already that when he went alone he did not provide himself with food. 'I have food to eat of which you do not know,' was his own explanation of this neglect of self. 'My food is doing the will of Him who has sent me, and finishing His work.' But for me that was not enough. I had often seen that in places far from succor he was tired and hungry. Had I been able to minister to him then it would have been my joy.

"But here I found my occasion. As I lay in the garden near his house, watching before dawn, I saw him come forth, turning his face toward the mountains. Immediately I hastened to the market which was opening for

trade. There I purchased a basket in which I placed two wheaten loaves, the best that could be bought, a small round cheese no bigger than an apple which was a dainty of that country-side, a cake of dried raisins, and a few fresh figs. My basket being lined with leaves of the vine, and covered with the same, the whole was protected. This care was the more needful since I should not see him till the morrow, which would be the Jews' Sabbath. Then I knew that according to his custom he would go to their synagogue, where his teachings might cause trouble.

"Arrived at Nazareth, I found in a cleft of a rock outside the town a cool and secret place where I might hide my provender. Near it I passed the night to guard it from man and beast. In the morning I made my way to the synagogue, finding myself, in the general excitement, permitted to enter and sit down. A Jews' synagogue is not like a Greek or Roman temple, nor even like their own Temple as I have seen it in Jerusalem. It is but a plain rectangular room with benches. At one end is a

platform where a president sits, behind him the scrolls of their Law and Prophets on shelves concealed by a curtain. Of priest or worship there is none. He who wills may stand up to read and address the assembly. He who wills may question the speaker, and where questions and answers are many there is frequently much discussion.

"It being already noised abroad that he was in their town, every seat was taken. If anywhere there was room in which to stand, that place too was occupied. Some of his relatives were there, and many who had known him as a boy. From what I could judge by such fragments of talk as I overheard, their attitude was unbelieving rather than inimical. They thought it a subject for laughter that one whom they had seen grow up in their town like any other lad should be among the Prophets who were to redeem their Israel. 'He may deceive Capernaum, Cana, Nain,' I heard one say to another. 'Us he will not deceive. Have we not known his father and mother? His brothers and sisters, are they not here with us? Go

to!' Thus with laughter on their lips and scorn in their hearts they gathered to see him frustrated.

"Presently he entered, calm, noble, head erect, the embodiment of strength and beauty. Making his way to one of the cross-seats parallel with the end of the platform, where all could behold him, and whence he could behold all, he sat down. For reasons beyond curiosity, as I afterward came to understand, every eye was fixed on him. When the moment came he stood up, signifying that he would read from the Book of their Prophet Isaiah. And this was the passage which he chose:

" 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has consecrated me to preach the good news to the poor, He has sent me to announce to the prisoners their release, and to the blind their recovery of sight, to set the downtrodden at liberty, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

"On his handing back the scroll to the attendant there were some who murmured their applause. Other some showed indignation that

one whose father had been the carpenter of their town should assume such pretensions. Near where I sat a group of young men whispered and laughed behind their hands, not scrupling to make signs to one another that, if need arose, they would treat him with violence. Seeing this I swore to myself that I would give my life before one of them should touch him.

"Nevertheless, like all others wherever he appeared, they watched to see him work a miracle. Blind being there, and lame, and paralytic, they hoped he would heal as he had healed in the cities roundabout. Not only did he do nothing, but he told them why. Even in the Kingdom of Heaven, he said, the solitary worker's faith is not enough. It must have helpful coöperation. Where it is met by foregone distrust it is rendered ineffective. The prophet is never without honor except among his own kin and in his own country. It was to no widow in Israel that Elijah was sent, but to a woman of Sarepta, a Sidonian. It was no Hebrew leper who was healed by Elisha, but Naaman a Syrian. . . .

"Knowing in advance the conclusion to which he was leading them, they allowed him to go no further. The point was one as to which Israel had always been sensitive, and never so much so as then. The more this proud fanatic people lost their political independence the more tenaciously they clung to their spiritual eminence as the owners of the one true God. To say that even on occasions he should show to the Gentiles favors he did not extend to them was treason for which death was too light a punishment. Many of the prophets had preached this doctrine and been stoned for it. This pestilential fellow should be put out of the way by the easiest method known to them.

"No sooner had they seized his point than the synagogue was in an uproar. Surging around him they raged, denounced, and threatened. But lifting their hands to strike him, no one struck. There was that in him, a majesty, a sacredness, which forbade the grosser forms of insult. The worst they could do was by weight of numbers to force him from the

synagogue into the street, crowding about him in such a way as to compel him up their hill. Their city being built on the side of a cliff, it is topped by a wooded ridge, which breaks to a deep and dangerous precipice. 'To the rock! To the rock!' were the cries about him. The young men I had seen whispering in the synagogue made signs to one another how they would dash him down. Men cursed him; women screamed at him; children picked up handfuls of offal which they dared not throw. He alone, superb and secure, was calm with the tranquillity of strength.

"Suddenly, with a gentle detaching movement of the hands, he put them all away from him. There was no force in the action beyond the force of command. But like children rebuked, all fell back from him. The old men ceased to curse, the younger ones to mock. Over the multitude silence fell, and a strange amazement. He spoke not a word, but, the way being free, he went on. From the eyes of memory the grandeur of that movement will never pass nor fade. Kings have I seen since

then, and Cæsars entering Rome in triumph after victory; but never one who carried with him the inborn authority of Jesus of Capernaum. Of Cæsar the imperial state was not in himself, but in his army, his trophies, his prisoners, his slaves, the adulation of citizens, many of whom hated him. This man was never so august as when alone before his enemies. Never angry, never resentful, never moved to avenge himself by so much as a frown, his might of serenity must have moved the highest gods, if such there be, to envy and imitation.

"Of the Nazarenes all dropped from his path, while he went up to the brow of the cliff whence they would have hurled him down. This he did without a companion and of his own free will. I, Galba, watched him with the rest, but when they went back crestfallen to their homes, I crept through bushes which hid me from sight and followed him. Soon I perceived him seated on a rock, gazing over the wide plain lying far below, called in the Jews' language Esdraelon. His back being turned to me I could slip away in search of my basket,

which was concealed hard by, and with this in my hand I approached him humbly.

" 'Master,' I faltered, 'be not angry. I have brought you food.'

"In his face as he looked toward me there was all the light and love that could ever have blessed mankind.

" 'Dear boy,' he smiled, 'have you followed me?'

"Down on my knees before him, I held out my basket as an offering. 'Only, Master, because I saw you were alone, and feared you might be hungry.'

" 'I am hungry,' he admitted, 'not having broken my fast since yesterday. Let us eat together.'

" 'Nay, Master,' I pleaded, 'lest there be not enough for two.'

"Once more he shed on me the sunlight of his smile. 'In the Kingdom of Heaven there is always abundance. You shall see.'

" 'Oh, Master,' I cried, 'where is this Kingdom? Is it far away? Could a Gentile boy ever enter into it?'

"As we ate he explained the Kingdom, simply, and in words I could comprehend. It was not far away, seeing that it was not merely round about me, but within me. It was a way of understanding. It was seeing life and the world and all things as they are seen by God. God was the great Father, the good Father, the loving Father, the Source from which all our blessings proceed. From this Source we receive not blessing and cursing together, but only blessing, not sweet water and bitter, but only sweet. In that Kingdom there are no evil things, no sin, sickness, poverty, or unhappiness. For those whose minds are close enough to the Father of Life there is not even death. We are in this Kingdom when we know we are. The mind having understood that fact, we create our own Heaven by admitting there nothing but the rule of God.

"With many other words, with parables and examples, he made this clear to me, till I think I seized it once for all. And before asking anything of myself he told me something of his own boyhood in that very town of Naza-

reth, on the very spot on which we sat. He had been a boy like any other boy; he had loved his games, his studies, his young friends. But very early in his life, so early that he could not recall its beginning, his mind had been preoccupied with the thought that God was his Father; and if his Father, then the Father of every other boy; and if the Father of every other boy, then the Father of all men and women everywhere; and if the Father of all men and women everywhere, then the difference between Jew and Gentile, Roman, Greek, and Edomite, broke down. Bond and free, rich and poor stood alike before God, the one as well as the other endowed with the right to spiritual grace and physical welfare. Then it had come to him that the simplest way to test a conclusion was to act on it. That was all he had ever done, finding the reward so great that the people said he worked miracles. He had not worked miracles; he had only proved to himself, and he hoped to some others, that the resources of the Kingdom of Heaven were infinite.

"But it was where we sat that he had thought most of his problems out. Of his advances in understanding each great feature of the landscape now stood like a monument. Calling my attention to the smiling beauty of the plain, he said that thus our life in the Kingdom of Heaven always seemed to him. The valley of the Jordan, of which we could trace the line, with the rocky land of Perea on the other side, typified the harsh road along which our race had traveled to reach its present knowledge of God. The long fringe of Carmel to the west, with its abrupt termination in the sea, marked the way to that wide Gentile world over which he yearned and which meant the future of man's faith. Behind us to the south lay the gloomy mountains of Samaria, with the more sullen country of Judea beyond them, the Altar of Sacrifice on which they would one day offer up the Lamb of God.

" 'And,' quoth he, 'my work is not yet accomplished. I have still many truths to test, still new experiments to make. Even in the Kingdom of Heaven we progress as God gives

us the ability. I have healed the sick, given sight to the blind, and released the sin-bound from their sin. But I have not yet raised the dead, nor shown that by his coöperation with the Father any Son of God can rise even when death has held him. Having conquered other things I must conquer death, and you, if you continue loving me, may see it.'

"So in sweet confidential talk the afternoon of that strange Sabbath passed. He never seemed to condescend to me, but to be a boy like myself. There was indeed something about him of Everlasting Youth. It may have been his simplicity, or his innocence, or his love of the life out of doors, or the power to take things as they came, without regrets for the past or forebodings as to the future. To the incident in the synagogue that morning he did not return, nor did it seem to sadden him. All his discourse was as to pleasant things, over which he often laughed right merrily. Because of his respect for the Jews' law of the Sabbath day's journey we abode where we were that night, supping from the fragments in the basket.

Strange to say these fragments provided us with plenty not only for the evening meal, but for breaking our fast in the morning.

"During the warm softness of the night he asked me of myself, learning the little I had to tell.

" 'Never forget,' he bade me, 'that in my Father's house is your home. This means not a far-distant home which you can reach only through the portal of death; but a home for your immediate use. If you have not found it hitherto it is because you have not known how to seek it.'

" 'But, Lord, I have not known the right way, nor do I know it now.'

" 'Remember the words I spoke only a few days since. Seek first the Kingdom of God, and uprightness before Him, and all these other things, home, shelter, teaching, love, all that a little boy has need of, will be given you besides.'

" 'But, Master, where shall anyone in Jewry give a home to a Gentile boy?'

" 'In my Father's house are many mansions.

Provision is there made for everyone. You will see. It will be a Gentile home, such as you are in need of. Now that by loving and following me you have sought the Kingdom, its resources will be at your command.'

"On the morrow as we descended toward Capernaum he told me of a Roman captain in that town who was among his friends. Without having become a proselyte to the Jews' religion, as many did, this captain had loved the True and Only God to whom the Jews' religion had introduced him. He became, too, a devout and earnest listener whenever the Master spoke.

" 'Now this man is beloved of his own slaves, whom he himself loves in return. It chanced one day, not long ago, that one of his servants fell ill. On his appealing to me I answered that I would come and heal him. Immediately he said, I am not worthy to have you under my roof. Speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. Astonished at this, I told the multitude that I had not found anyone in Israel with so much faith. Go, I said

to the captain; you will find it just as you believe. This man,' the Master continued, 'is still at Capernaum. He loves me; he is my friend. Whatever I ask him he will do for me, and for you as well.'

"Then I understood. With the Roman captain was to be the home the Kingdom of Heaven would provide for me. But what would have been a joy to me a few days earlier was now a grief.

" 'O Master!' I cried, 'why may I not follow you and be your servant?'

" 'Because, dear lad, the Father has work for you which could not be done in that way. You must grow up in the company of other lads. You must know the love and care of a family. You must learn and work, and have a long life, with children and grandchildren to rise up and bless you. I have that to do in which no boy could share. Were you to attach yourself to me you would soon be alone again, and insufficiently protected. But I shall not leave you; I shall not cease to bear you in my heart. If it be your will to continue lov-

ing me, you will best show your love by living the life into which the Father will lead you.'

"Thus it came to pass that I entered the family of Publius Verus Lucillus, becoming to him as a son. Not that he had no other sons. Three he had, and two daughters. Having been commended by Jesus of Capernaum, I found myself welcomed by them all, clad and fed and taught like a Roman boy of better family than that from which I sprang. My one grief was that when the Roman power moved my foster father from Capernaum to Tyre we went out of the sphere in which our Master worked. For nearly a year in Tyre little tidings of him came to us, and what we then received was worse than none at all.

"Most of his time he was spending now, or so we heard, in Jerusalem and the regions roundabout. There the Jews plotted to have him slain. At last we were told that the approaching Passover would not go by without his being put to death as a rebel against the Roman authority.

"Then was my foster father sore distressed, and being on influential terms with Pontius Pilatus, the governor in Jerusalem, he determined to travel thither and see what he could do by means of intercession. As he was taking the slave who had been healed I pleaded with him also to take me. This he did, for he treated me with love, and so with soldiers and servants we set out. Wherever we lay at night we made inquiries as to the fate of Jesus of Capernaum, but not till we reached Bethany, on the outskirts of Jerusalem, did we learn that he had been crucified on the previous day.

"Of our mourning I will say nothing. Entering the city, my foster father sought Pilatus the governor, whom he rebuked right bitterly. After that he stretched himself out upon the earth, refusing food and comfort. Left to myself, I coursed the city, seeking of all and sundry such news of my Master's end as I could learn. Out to the Hill of Calvary I went, getting confirmation of the tales I had heard from the three empty crosses still standing on the Place of a Skull, as the skull-shaped summit of

that hill was named. Near by there was a garden where they told me he had been laid. A tomb I found, beating my body against it, and shedding tears.

"It being now near nightfall, I should have returned to the inn where our retinue lay, but to drag my footsteps from that holy place was beyond my power. Accustomed to sleeping beneath the stars, I was unafraid, and food I could not have tasted. Some consolation it was to me to lie so near that beloved form, hidden out of sight though it were behind a rock-hewn door.

"The Jews' manner to bury differs somewhat from ours in that a chamber is hollowed in a rock which is often a solitary boulder. In this way a door is formed which slopes upward and outward from the ground. This curving portal is so closely fitted that when shut it is one again with the rock itself. Dashing myself against the hard rounded surface, I wore myself out with weeping.

"But by the time that it was fully night, and

the moon shining amid the glades of olive, cypress, and cedar, I had exhausted my tears and grown calm. All I could think of was that the adored form lay but two or three cubits away, within the impenetrable stone. Had I been permitted one last glance at the face and eyes which had never been turned on me otherwise than in love, it seemed to me that my sorrow would have been lightened. But all was gone. Next day we should set out again for Tyre, and from there to Spain or Britain as the powers at Rome appointed. This incident would be over, and not as long as life lasted should I ever see my beloved Jesus of Capernaum again.

"So in silent sorrow the night wore itself away. I slept not; I had no desire to sleep. All my consolation was to know that I was there, so near him, though he had gone so far. I was seated now in the grass, and yet so close to the tomb that at any minute I could touch it, while the light of what they called their Paschal moon bathed me roundabout.

"This moon was soon to set. Where the open spaces of the garden had been bright they became blurred with darkness. The sycamores and cypresses which had stood out clearly against the purple sky now mingled themselves with it. I knew that dawn was not distant, though in the east there was as yet no sign of it.

"For these reasons a faint seam of light marking the line where the door of the sepulcher had been cut and refitted was the more visible. It was such a seam as will often be observed round a closed door in any dark chamber where a candle is burning on the other side. How long I had noticed it before becoming consciously aware of it I cannot tell. Indeed, it seemed to me that it had been there throughout the night, that my heart had perceived it, though my eyes had been holden.

"I was not startled. I had little sense of the unusual. In my thoughts of Jesus of Capernaum there had always been so much of light that it did not seem strange that he should shed a radiance even in his grave. The one

reflection I clearly recall was to the effect that if I later told anyone of what I was seeing he would not believe me. He would say that I was sleeping without knowing it. Wondering if that was not the case, I did the usual things which people do to assure themselves that they are awake. Some shivers and filings of stone left on the ground when the door had been drilled I picked up and stowed in my wallet. These are the stones I have had incased in the small golden shrine all my children will remember. I gathered them one by one so as to have something, if not much, to tell me that I was capable of action when witnessing wonders beyond any I have ever known in a dream.

"I was still endeavoring to convince myself that I was awake, when an even greater marvel came to my attention. For a space of perhaps the breadth of two fingers the door of the sepulcher lowered itself gently. Remaining fixed for a few minutes, it then closed again. Had I been on the top of the rock instead of at its base I could have peered within. A few

minutes later this effort was repeated, the door standing open at its highest line for perhaps the width of a man's hand. While it did so the glow of the light which streamed through the interstice was strong and unflickering, like that of no earthly candle. The action was noiseless, as if some one possessed of a kind of strength of which I had no knowledge was doing his best to roll back the slab from within.

"On the fourth attempt the door remained open for at least two cubits, so that had I stood upright I could easily have looked behind it. As it was I lay prone upon the grass, amazed and excited, but too much overawed to forestall by a second that which might soon be revealed to me. But on this fourth attempt the opened portal did not close again. Balanced on its base for a time, it finally lowered itself, softly, easily, soundlessly, till in full width and length it fell beside me in the grass.

"And there he lay, my Jesus of Capernaum, tall, straight, vigorously framed, swathed in white, his features hidden by a gravecloth. Even to a boy—I was then fourteen—the

majesty of his presence was heightened by the mystery and solitude of the grave. Here was that shrine of eternal loneliness, in which the busy, crowded life of man works out to the peace of everlasting nothingness, as the body gives itself back to its primal dust. Except for this disclosure to me, made with I knew not what intent, Jesus of Capernaum would lie here within the bosom of the rock while the ages rolled over him and over him, and till in the turmoil of new epochs his name would be blotted out. But there was grandeur in that destiny, the spirit free at last of torment and futility, proof against pain forever.

"As far as I found a reason for my being permitted to see what I saw it was some kindly act of compensation for the denials which had shut me out from a share in the last days of the man I loved. I was to be allowed at least to view him as he lay at rest. What great mystic power granted me this favor I could not guess. Great mystic powers were beyond my ken, even the agency we call God being unknown to me except as the Father of Jesus

of Capernaum. Nevertheless, this boon had been granted, and so I lay prone, absorbing the details of the tomb in a manner never to forget them. Presently the great stone door would shut again and the line of light fade out in the common day.

"Then beneath the graveclothes I suddenly saw a hand raised. It rose—and fell. It rose —and fell again. At the same time within the cerements there seemed to be a stirring. It was such a stirring, sweet, faint, as you will sometimes see in an infant's frame before he wakes from sleep. Then for long minutes there was nothing, only the rigid outline swathed in white.

"I came to the conclusion that whatever the forces at work in this sepulcher they could not be summoned at will. Force was somewhere striving with force, the new overcoming the old, but only by the mightiest tests of strength. In the quiescent minutes I began to see a gathering of new energies, to result in further accomplishments.

"Of these the next was the freeing of a hand.

Bound as it was, it detached itself easily, gracefully, with no signs of struggle, but by means too quick for me to follow. There was again a stillness, while the hand lay outstretched among the graveclothes, long, slender, bronzed even in its pallor, as I had so often seen it, but with a great healed wound in back and palm which might have been the mark of a wooden nail. That this wound should have healed so soon was in itself a matter for surprise. Nothing but awe held me back from seizing the hand and kissing it.

"And presently it moved. It moved restlessly, aimlessly, at first, till suddenly it brushed the face cloth from the face. This it did as if impelled by a power outside the mind's direction. I mean that I saw no sign of mind, of breath in the body, nor of consciousness. The beloved features, thus uncovered, were calm, and younger than I had remembered them. Quietly upturned, clearly cut, the crisp growth of beard, of the color of gold in which there is a strong alloy of copper, bearing its witness to his natural strength, they were the

features of one whom the darker powers could never, as I see it now, have kept within their grasp. Needless to tell you I watched breathlessly.

"And I watched long. So long it was that now I had seen his face I began to think myself at the end of my strange privileges. It would soon be dawn, and with dawn the sepulcher would close again. I should go my way, to Tyre, to Rome, or wherever my future lot might be cast, but I should never forget that the Father of Jesus of Capernaum had allowed me this one look on the face of His dead Son.

"But as I was thinking this there came a quiver of an eyelid. Later there was a twitching of the lips behind the beard. By and by the breast began to heave with a gentle breathing. He lived! He might once have been dead, but now he was alive again, even as I was myself! 'Master! Master!' I was crying in my heart, but no sound broke from me.

"Then the eyes opened. They opened like those of a newborn child. At first they seemed to see nothing, only to look. They looked pon-

deringly, wisely, as if judging of what they saw by other standards than ours. In color they were blue, but of that deep-sea blue, the blue of the richest sapphires, which is often black. For a time I feared that if they were turned on me he would no longer remember me.

"But when they were so turned the action was again with a little child's lack of consciousness. At last there came a smile. It came slowly, but it came radiantly. Never, I think, could such a smile have been vouchsafed to any other creature in the world. 'Master! Master!' I cried, this time aloud. 'Dear little boy,' was the response. 'Sweet it is to me to have you here.'

"Beneath the coverings I could see the other hand seeking to free itself. 'Master,' I pleaded, 'may I not aid you?'

" 'No, dear child. This is work which I must do alone. In conquering death I may use no help but the Father's. If I did a large part of its meaning would vanish from my task.'

" 'But what is its meaning, Lord?'

" 'The proving to my brethren that there is no death. Telling them would not be enough. I must show them the powers the Father has endowed us with by using them. Even so, most of them will not believe me. They have seen me on the Cross; they looked on while I died; they watched while loving hands buried me. Nevertheless, few of them will accept the fact that I have risen even when they see me and talk to me as you are doing now.'

"This, indeed, I could understand, since I scarce accepted it myself. This man, I reasoned, could never have been dead, in any sense which I ascribed to death. His eyes shone, his lips smiled, his voice rang with the freedom and force of living activity. How could he have been dead, when here he was so vitally alive?

"As if in answer to these thoughts he spoke again. He spoke tranquilly, lying in his tomb, as a man might speak from his bed.

" 'Had I not actually gone through the change to which we have given the name Death, I should not have been able to show on coming

back that I have all the faculties of life. Soon you will see that I have more than you have hitherto known me to possess. This is much for my brethren to be assured of. They have been afraid of death. I myself shrank from it. That was because I understood it but a little better than themselves. Now that I have been through it, and come back, I can show it as a fuller grasp of that Kingdom of God which here we seize but partially.'

"Suddenly he raised himself, and sat upright. This he did with the grace of an athlete, all whose muscles are at his command. Seated there he was as much at ease as if on his couch in a chamber. The face cloth which had slipped to the rock floor of the sepulcher he picked up and folded, laying it in a corner of the tomb, near the rough stone ledge, slightly hollowed out, which had served him as a pillow. Concentrated as he was upon his purpose, he nevertheless continued speaking, gently, and in simple words, in order, apparently, that I, a boy, should understand him.

"'Were this great triumph of man over death to be wrought for my sake alone it would not have been worth while. Merely to magnify me would not be to help my brethren. The thing they must learn is that what I have done they too can do. There is no need for them to pass through the horrors of pain and the grave in order to reach the next step in being; they can, at the appointed time, migrate of their own free will, as the birds fly north and south. My task is to show them that it can be done.'

"'But, Master,' I had the temerity to object, 'I see not how it can be done, even though I see you doing it.'

"His smile was one of piercing sweetness. 'Dear boy, I said not *how* it can be done, but *that* it can be done. That it can be done I can demonstrate to the eye. How it can be done is for each to discover for himself. Live sinlessly; heal the sick; cast out evils. He who does that will put off the life of time and put on that of the ages as a man casts aside an

outworn cloak and robes himself in one more glorious.'

" 'But, Lord,' I murmured, 'will any man after you ever be equal to these things?'

" 'Not perhaps for thousands of years, as time is counted in the mortal world. Men in growing numbers will applaud the example I give them, but make no attempt to follow it. That it implies sinlessness, or a state as near to sinlessness as may be reached, will in itself keep men and women from awakening the powers which as yet are asleep in them, and will remain asleep for ages and ages to come. For ages and ages to come the seekers after truth will strive to find the way behind the veil by means of no great efficiency, advancing here, and losing ground there, but making little progress anywhere. My way they will reject because it is too difficult. Till all other ways have been tried in vain it will remain too difficult, but by that time a new race of children of God will have been born. Then shall they return to what you, beloved lad, are witnessing this morning. They will see at last

that once and for all the experiment has been made and set themselves to learn how. That *how* there will then be no reason to explain, since all but the vicious will not only love God, but will understand Him.'

"Even as he spoke I began to see a change in him. Hitherto he had been Jesus of Capernaum much as I had known him. Some slight difference there was, such a difference as you will see between a man whom you have known only in sickness when you see him well; but it was no more than that. Now all at once he began to glow as if light was his raiment instead of such clothes as mortals wear or put on their dead. It was not fire or flame or anything that burned; rather it was a self-illumination.

"Nevertheless, he still continued to sit upright and to speak to me. 'Above all things take heed to this, dear lad. It is not knowing about the Father that will prove to be eternal life; it is knowing *Him*. Understanding Him you will have in your hands a portion of his power. You will be able to rule your life,

freed from the tyranny of chance and circumstance. To me who have carried out the Father's will all power is given in Heaven and in earth. To you it will be given in like manner, according to the measure of your obedience.'

"What happened next I saw not, even though I was looking on. It was action too quick and transcendent for my eyes to follow. He left the tomb. He was standing before me. Between the moment in which he sat addressing me and that in which he stood above me, my eyes on a level with his feet, there was not, so far as I could judge, the briefest interval of time. But there he was, moving as I had seen him move in the past, only on feet of light.

"On feet of light he was robed in light. In the tomb the graveclothes lay empty and discarded. The face cloth was wrapped and apart, even as he had placed it. Tall, erect, majestic, but loving and kind beyond all comprehension of thought, he stood before me in raiment like unto sunbeams.

"'Beloved boy,' quoth he, softly and strongly, 'you have followed me with a very sweet affection. Now I shall do the same with you. You will not see me, but I shall be there, helping you through a long mortal life that will bring you both joy and care. Always remember that I shall never leave you nor forsake you.'

"And then, as I knelt, my hands clasped, looking up at him adoringly, my eyes were unable to keep the vision. It was not he who vanished; it was I who could no longer behold. The beauty was too great; the radiance too intense. He did not fade, nor leave me, nor disappear. The inability was on my side. He grew too glorious. That was all.

"In the garden it was dark, with the first hint of dawn in the darkness. There was now no light from the tomb, nor had I any companionship. Moreover, two Roman guards who seemed to have lain near by in a drunken sleep awoke and began to curse. Unseen by them, I slipped away.

"Near the gate of the garden I passed three women who were entering. I heard one say to the others, 'The spices have we brought, the ointments, and the linen; but who shall roll away for us the door of the sepulcher?' Hiding behind a sycamore I waited till they had gone by.

"But when I told my foster father of how I had spent the night, and of what I had seen in doing it, he bade me keep it secret. Already he had heard whispers in the court of Pilatus that some trouble was afoot. The report had gone round that the body had been stolen while the soldiers slept, and the governor feared a scandal. So enjoining silence, and himself believing that Jesus of Capernaum was dead beyond resurrection, my foster father gave the word that we should set out that selfsame day for Tyre.

"Erelong we were transferred from Tyre to Rome, from Rome to Colonia Agrippina on the river Rhine, and from Colonia Agrippina to Londinium in the province of Britannia. Here my foster father died and I grew to manhood,

marrying a British wife. All my offices being in this distant portion of the Empire, I heard no more of Jesus of Capernaum till the other day. Then, strange to relate, an old man, a wanderer, came to our town to deliver what he called an evangelium. His name, they told me, was Joseph of the town of Arimathea, in the Jews' country. All this way he had traveled, holding meetings in town after town, to deliver his message that a man had risen from the dead. At once I sought him out. 'Can it be,' I asked, 'that he of whom you would tell us is one Jesus of Capernaum?' 'The same,' quoth he. 'Have you already heard of him?' 'Not only have I heard of him,' quoth I, 'but I have known him. Not only have I known him, but in a garden in the Jews' city of Jerusalem, three days after his death, as the Jews reckon time, I saw him as he . . .' "

But here the manuscript breaks off.

NOTE.—All quotations from the New Testament in the above are taken from the American translation into modern speech by Dr. Goodspeed.

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